ISLAHI KHUTBAAT

DISCOURSES ON ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE

Part 5

By
Justice Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

DARUL-ISHAAT
KARACHI-1, PAKISTAN.

DISCOURSES ON ISLAMIC WAY OF LIFE

VOL. V

By

Justice Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

Translated By

Iqbal Hussain Ansari

DARUL ISHA'AT

URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1
PAKISTAN (021) 2631861

Vol. V

Includes

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The English version of the Islahi Khutbat, has been published by Darul Isha'at Pakistan. This is solely because of the Favours of Allah on us and the prayers of our mentors.

This is the translation of the reformative speeches of Mufti Justice Mawlana Muhammad Taqi Usmani may Allah prolong his benefits over us. He has been given these lectures for about ten years every week at the Bait ul Mukarram Masjid, Karachi. Those who attend these lectures gain much knowledge theoretically and practically. I, too, attend these lectures and have been deriving much advantage. These lectures are being recorded on audio cassettes and books are published subsequently. These cassettes and books cater to those who understand the Urdu language.

We at Darul Isha'at desired that an increased number of people should benefit from these lectures. Allah helped us get these books translated into English and publish them and He also provided us the necessary means. *Al-Hamdu-lil-laah,* after six years of continuous effort a

complete set of these books is available to the readers. Let our readers remember that these books have been translated from oral lectures of the honourable Mufti Justice Mawlana Muhammad Taqi Usmani and not from his writings.

They may, therefore, find in them the style of the spoken words that the translator may have retained here and there.

We have endeavoured to match the get up of the books with their invaluable content and have paid due care in the use of paper, printing and binding. We hope that this set of books will be very useful to our readers in Europe and the United States. They will gain beneficial knowledge from these books and be prompted to put their knowledge into practice.

Insha Allah they will find a great change in their everyday life.

We have published many books in English and many more are under preparation. Do write to us for a full list of these books.

Finally, I request my readers to remember me in their prayers as also my parents and family members. May Allah reward them.

KHALIL ASHRAF USMANI
S/O MOHAMMAD RAZI USMANI

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To The English Edition by
Justice Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

On the advice of some of my elders I hold a weekly meeting in Jamia Masjid AlBaitul Mukaram attended by a large number of Muslim brothers and sisters. Rather than giving a formal lecture, my basic purpose intended to be achieved through these meetings is that we get together for some time to review our ways of life in the light of Islamic teachings and to deliberate what is going to happen to us after we leave this mundane world. When the Muslims having true Islamic orientation sit together for this purpose, each one of them benefit from the other to create a genuine concern about our coming life which is the real and eternal life as compared to the present one which may come to an end any time.

I this mutual meeting which is meant for self-correction I normally read a book of Hadith and explain it to the audience in the light of what I have learned from my elders with special reference to the current attitude prevailing in our society and touching upon the relevant practical issues, social evils and the major faults found in our practical life. My friend Maulana Abdulla Memon who regularly attended these meetings usually prepares the audio cassettes of these addresses which are widely circulated in the country and abroad. He has also transcribed some of these audio cassettes in an abridged form and after their compilation he has published them in separate

volumes under the title of "Islahi Khutbaat". Nine volumes of this compilations have already come out in Urdu by the grace of Allah which were widely circulated, read and benefited from.

Since long some of my friends were suggesting that these addresses be rendered into English as well so that they may be useful for the English readership. I was reluctant to act upon the suggestion because, as told earlier, these addresses were not formal lectures on a particular subject. They were in fact discussions, on different aspects of our lives, undertaken with frankness rather than formalism. They some time lack the sequence usually expected from a well considered writing. Therefore, I do not know how far their translation will be as meaningful and effective as it was proved to be in the original Urdu language. However, my nephew, Mr. Khalil Ashraf Usmani, the proprietor of Darul Ishaat, requested Mr. Iqbal Ansari and Mr. Rafiq Abdur Rehman to translate these Khutbaat into English. Both of these gentlemen undertook the task and the outcome of their noble effort is appearing before the readers. I had advised them not to be too strict in literal translation and to render the basic idea in their own style. I had no opportunity to go through the manuscript of their translation but had an occasion to have a cursory look on some passages. To the best of my assessment the translation I have seen is correct and conveying. I hope that it will help readers to understand the basic theme of these Khutbaat. May Allah grant the best reward to the translators and publisher of this book and make it beneficial for the readers. I would again remind the readers that it is not a book properly authored by me. It is the compilation of my extempore discussions therefore, I extend my apology if some readers find the sequence of thoughts somehow disturbed in some places. However, the readers should concentrate on the message given and not on the style adopted.

Muhammad Taqi Usmani

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MODESTY - A MEANS TO RISE TO HIGH RANKS

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

MODESTY - A MEANS TO RISE TO HIGH RANKS

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه، ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيئات اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلى اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا۔

اما بعد!   فقد قال رسول الله سلى الله عليه وسلم :

من تواضع لله رفعه الله (ترمذى، كتاب البروالصلة، باب ماجاء فى التواضع)

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek his forgiveness and believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our selves and the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom Allah guides and there is

none to guide him whom Allah lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah the One He has no partner. I also bear witness that our sire, and our authority and our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah have mercy on him, his household and and on his Companions رضی الله عنهم and bless them and salute them all in great abundance.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"Allah raises him in rank who takes to modesty for the sake of Allah".

I have read to you at the moment a saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It means that Allah raises him in rank who takes to modesty for the sake of Allah. Presently I want to explain briefly the reality of modesty, its importance, as implied in the Prophet's ﷺ saying, and how to practise modesty. May Almighty Allah help me, by His mercy, to tackle the topic rightly.

The Importance of Modesty

The importance of Modesty may be understood from the fact that a man who is deprived of this quality become Pharaoh and Namrood. This is because a heart vacant of the quality of modesty falls a victim to the vice of pride and self-esteem - vices which are the root of all spiritual diseases.

The Foundation of the First sin of Disobedience

The first sin of disobedience was committed in this universe by Iblis (Satan). It was he who sowed the first seed of this sin. Before him there waა no concept of disobedience. When Almighty Allah created Hazrat Adam

عليه السلام and commanded all the angels to prostrate themselves before him عليه السلام. Iblis refused to porstrate himself and said:

اَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ خَلَقْتَنِيْ مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهٗ مِنْ طِيْنٍ (سورة ص: ٧٦)

"I am better than he, because you have created me from Fire and have created him from clay."
(38 : 76)

Iblis thought that Fire being superior to clay, he was superior to Adam عليه السلام. He could, therefore, not postrate himself before Adam عليه السلام.Thus, this was, the first sin of disobedience in the universe and this sprang from a feeling of pride and self-esteem. Allah, therefore, condemned him till the Day of Judgment. This clearly shows that the root of all vices is pride. A heart harbouring pride must also harbour in it other vices.

Do not use your Intellect against Allah's Command

The reason for this pride was that Satan felt proud of his intellect. He thought that he was offering an inllectual proof which was, difficult to dismiss as, in his opinion, fire was better than clay. Thus, he used his intellect against Allah with the inevitable result that he was condemned for ever and turned away. Dr. Iqbal has very ably brought out this fine point:-

صبح ازل یہ مجھ سے کہا جبرئیل نے
جو عقل کا غلام ہو، وہ دل نہ کر قبول

That is: on the morning of eternity, Jibrael عليه السلام advised me not to accept that heart which is a slave to the intellect.

See how Satan, becomng a slave to his intellect, disowned slavery to Allah. He failed to understand the truth that it was Allah Who created Adam عليه السلام and the

entire Universe. As such, it was his duty to bow down his head before Allah. He disobeyed Allah's command and was rightly condemned for ever.

Pride is the root of all sins

Anyway, pride is the root of all sins. Pride generates anger, jealousy, malice etc. It is due to pride that sins of injuring others feelings and backbiting are committed. It is impossible to get rid of these vices unless modesty is acquired and practised.

The Reality of Modesty

" تواضع " is an Arabic word. It means that one should consider oneself to be inferior. It is, however, not (modesty) to claim it (modesty) only verbally. It has become a fashion nowadays to call oneself meanest, worthless Guilty or sinner. They are under the impression that by using these words the quality of modesty is acquired. It should be noted that it is not modesty to call oneself modest. The real modesty is to feel and realize in the heart that one is modest. One should feel that one has no importance and if one has done anything good, it was due to Allah's help and mercy without which one could do nothing. This is the reality of modesty. If this true modesty has been attained it does not matter whether or not one calls oneself mean, worthless or good for nothing. Allah raises him in rank who acquires modesty in the true sense as pointed out above.

Examples of Modesty practised by our saintly elders

There are respected saints and learned men from whom we learn *Deen* (Faith) and virtuous acts. If we read their biographies we will know that they considered themselves the lowest of all. I have heard this statement of

Maulana Ashraft Ali Thanawi رحمة الله عليه from many of my saintly elders:-

It is my behaviour that I regard every Muslim superior to me, because he is a believer in his existing state; and I regard every non-Muslim superior to me, because there is always a possibility of his becoming by the grace of Allah, a beleiver any time in the future and he may become a better Muslim than I.

Once Hazrat Maulana Khan Muḥammad Sahib رحمة الله عليه, a favourite Khalifah of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه said to Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Hasan Sahib رحمة الله عليه he felt that he was inferior to all these present in the assembly of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه. Hearing this Hazrat Mufti Sahib رحمة الله عليه said that he too had the same feeling about himself. They both decided to submit this matter to Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه to know whether this was a good or a bad situation for them. Hearing this experience, Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه told them that there was nothing wrong in it and said that when he sat in the assemblies he also felt likewise that all the members present there were suprior to him.

This is the reality of modesty. When this sense of modesty overpowers a man he feels that he is inferior even to animals, what to say of men.

The Modesty of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Hazrat Anas رضی الله عنه has narrated in a Hadith that when any man shook hands with the Holy Prophet ﷺ on meeting him ﷺ, he did not withdraw his hands until the other person withdrew his hands. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also did not turn his face until that person turned his face. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting in an assembly he did not place his knees so as to project them before those

of others. In other words he did not sit in a distinctive pose. (Tirmizi, ... ch. No: 46)

It occurs in certain narratives that in the beginning it was the practice that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to sit in assemblies along with the people without any distinction, but in this way new comers could not distinguish the Prophet ﷺ from others. When the assembly was large it sometimes became difficult for the people at the back to meet him ﷺ. They, therefore, proposed that the Holy Prophet ﷺ should take his seat at some raised place to enable the audience to see and hear him ﷺ with convenience. The Holy Prophet ﷺ accepted the proposal and a wooden bench was provided for him to sit on and talk to the people.

The style of walking of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

It appears from all this that man should not create for himself a distinctive and prominent position. He should pass his life among the common men like a commoner. It is, however, allowed to adopt a distinctive pose where it becomes unavoidable to do so There is a Hadith which describes the style of the Prophet's ﷺ walking:

" ما رأى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم ياكل متكناقط، ولا يطأ عقبه رجلان " (ابو داؤد، كتاب الا طعمة، باب فى الاكل متكا)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was never seen eating, while supporting himself against a cushion, or walking followed by a group of men. It is, therefore, not desirable that a man should be walking with his disciples and pupils walking behind him at his heels. On such occasion the human self and Satan beguile him into the belief that such a large crowd is following him only because there is some

superiority and attraction in him. Man should avoid such a situation as far as possible. Following the Prophet's style man should try to walk either all alone or alongwith the people and not as a leader walking in front of them.

Hazrat Thanawi's Announcement

It is written in the notebook of Maulana Thanawi's routine that he had made an announcement that nobody should follow him from behind, nor walk side by side with him. If he was walking alone he should be left alone. He said that he did not like at all that he should walk like a leader, two men walking on his right and another two men on his left. Man should walk like an ordinary man.. Once he announced that if he was going with something in his hand, none should try to take that thing from his hand, but he should be left to go undisturbed. This was to avoid creating any distinction for himself.

Take to Humbleness and Self-dedication

My Sheikh, Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say that what is needed is a matter of servitude, dedication and obedience, a matter of humbleness and submissiveness. The more man effaced his ego and the more he displayed his quality of servitude, the more acceptable he would become - God willing - in the sight of Allah. The Sheikh would then recite this Persian couplet:

فہم خاطر تیز کردن نیست راہ

جز شکستہ می نگیرد فضل شاہ

This means that one cannot find the straight path leading to Allah by claiming wisdom and cleverness. the King's (Allah's) mercy and favour overtake him who displays his humbleness and obedience

Expression of pomp and show and pride is nothing but mere vanity. The occasion for feeling joy and pride is that moment when at the time of departing from this world Almighty Allah should say:

يَاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ ارْجِعِىْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً فَادْخُلِىْ فِىْ عِبَادِىْ وَادْخُلِىْ جَنَّتِىْ (سورة الفجر:٢٧-٣٠)

"O contended soul! Return to your Lord satisfied and contented. Enter among My servants and enter (as a result) My Paradise.(89: 27-30)

Look! The soul is being addressed to enter into the group of Allah's servants. This shows that servitude (or obedience) is the highest station of man.

The way of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to express humbleness

In every matter the Holy Prophet ﷺ preferred that mode of life in which there was servitude, obedience and humbleness. Almighty Allah once asked his Prophet ﷺ, if he liked that the mount Uhud was turned into a mount of gold to remove his hardships. In reply to this divine offer the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: No, I prefer that I may remain hungry one day and satisfy my hunger the other day (اجوع يوما واشبع يوما), so that I may render thanks to You on the day I am well-fed and have patience on the day I am hungry and have to beg You to feed me. It occurs in a Hadith:

ماخير رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بين امرين قط الااخذايسرهما

(صحيح بخارى، كتاب الادب، باب قول النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم: يسروا ولا تعسروا)

This means that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ had to choose between two alternatives, he ﷺ always chose the easier of the two. He ﷺ did so, because choosing the

difficult alternative implies a claim to bravery and show of ability. On the other hand, choosing the easier alternative implies an admission of humbleness, submissiveness, obedience, weakness and helplessness. The road to success is, therefore, humbleness, obedience and self-dedication. Dedication means that man should adopt self-denial before Allah's pleasure and command. The dedication guarantees all success and salvation.

The Time is not yet Ripe

Our Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say very useful and wonderful points of wisdom and knowledge. One day he رحمة الله عليه said: When "*Polaw*" (a delicious dish of rice and meat) is cooked, the rice first begins to boil with a boiling sound and it circulates in the cooking pot. All this is a sign that the cooking is not complete and the dish of "*Polaw*" is not yet ready to eat. When the process of cooking nears completion, the rice settles down in the pot: it has no noise, no movement and no boiling. No sooner is the process of cooking complete, than the rice begins to give out refreshing and appetizing fragrance. Now it has become tasteful and palatable, worthy of being served and enjoyed.

صبا جو ملنا تو کہنا میرے یوسف سے
پھوٹ نکلی تیرے پیراھن سے بو تیری

The couplet contains a reference to the story of Prophet (Joseph) Yousuf عليه السلام. Here the sudden fragrance emanating from the cooking pot has been compared to the smell emanating from the garment of Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام.

Same is the example of a man. He is not ripe in his conduct, character and piety, as long as he claims openly or secretly that he has such and such qualities and

accomplishments in him. On the other hand when he admits before Allah his worthlessness and nothingness by renouncing his high-sounding claims, he becomes a favourite of Allah from whose personality rays of goodness and piety radiate.

On such occasions Dr. Sahib used to recite this beautiful couplet:

میں عارفی، آوارہ صحراء فنا ہوں
ایک عالم بے نام و نشاں میرے لئے ہے

This means: Almighty Allah has made me an aimless wanderer in the desert of self-dedication and has taught me the lesson of self-dedication. I have, thus, been granted a world which has neither a name nor marks of location. May Almighty Allah bestow this favour upon us also - *Aameen.*

Hazrat Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi رحمة الله عليه and "Modesty"

Hazrat Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi رحمة الله عليه was an 'Alim widely renowned and respected for his learning and academic accomplishments. He has related his own story as under:

"When I completed the Prophet's Biography in six volumes, a question continuously arose in my heart: Is there any reflection in my own life of the life of the sacred person ﷺ whose biography I have compiled. If not, how should this reflection be attracted. For this purpose he thought of calling upon a man of God, a saint. He had heard the name of Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi Sahib رحمة الله عليه who was providing right guidance to the people those days. He, therefore, went to Thana Bhawan (U.P. India) and called upon Maulana Thanawi رحمة الله عليه.

He stayed with Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه for few days. At the time of his departure Hazrat Nadwi requested Maulana Thanawi رحمة الله عليه to give him some advice. In such a situation Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه found himself in a fix and prayed to Allah for help so that he could say something which could prove beneficial to both. Thereafter, Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه addressed Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi رحمة الله عليه saying:

"Slef-effacement is the first and the final panacea in our system of spiritual discipline."

Hazrat Sayyid Sulaiman Nadwi رحمة الله عليه has said that while uttering these words he took his hand to his chest and brought it down with such a strong jerk that Hazrat Nadwi felt something like a shock on his heart.

Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه has reproted that after this incident Hazrat Nadwi رحمة الله عليه totally effaced his self that it is difficult to find another example. Dr. Sahib said that one day he saw Hazrat Nadwi رحمة الله عليه straightening the shoes of the visitors to the assembly of Maulana Thanawi رحمة الله عليه. Thus did Almighty Allah create this modesty and self-dedication in him. What was the result? Thereafter, emanated from him the fragrance of guidance and Allah raised him to a height which none but Allah alone Knows.

Expel the idol of Ego

It should be noted that as long as the idol of Ego is present in the heart the personality is immature and unripe. It will come to maturity like the boiling broth when the idol of "ego" has been smashed to pieces; this is the quality of self-dedication or self-effacement. Dedication means that man should purge his living and all his acts and movements from the vestiges of pride and

arrogance and take to humbleness and modesty. The road to success will-God willing - be opened for him the very day he adopts humbleness. Pride is the greatest hurdle in the way leading to the Truth. However great and dignified does a proud man regard himself and however depressed and disgraced does he regard the rest of humanity, in the last resort Allah grants honour and dignity to the modest and disgraces the proud and the haughty.

The Example of a Proud man

There is a very wise parable in the Arbaic language. The example of a proud man is like one who is standing on a mountain peak and thinks that those at the foot of the mountain are small. In the same way those at the foot of the mountain think that the man at the peak of the mountain is small. This is an optical illusion, otherwise they are all equal. In the same way the entire world regards the proud man as mean and the proud man regards the entire world as mean. The truth is that Almighty grants honour to those who efface themselves before Allah.

May Allah inculcate in us also the quality of modesty and humbleness. *Aameen*.

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه and Modesty

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say that sometimes he walked in his house barefooted. He did this in compliance with a *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He had read in some narrative that the Holy Prophet ﷺ on a certain occasion had walked barefooted.He said: While walking barefooted I said to myself: Look here! your real worth is that you have neither shoes for your feet, nor a cap on your head nor clothes on your body. You are ultimately going to return to the dust.

Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه and Modesty

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to relate an anecdote about Mufti Sahib رحمة الله عليه. He said that once he was sitting in his clinic on Robinson Road, Karachi, Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه was passing in front of the clinic all alone with some pot in his hand. Dr. Sahib asked those who were sitting with him if they knew the man who was passing by. Then he himself told them that he was the Grand Mufti of Pakistan who was going with a pot in his hand. None could guess from his clothes, style, and mode of walking that he was such a great Allamah.

Hazrat Mufti Aziz-ur-Raḥman Sahib رحمة الله عليه and Modesty

Hazrat Mufti Aziz-ur-Rahman Sahib رحمة الله عليه was one of the teachers of my respected father and the grand Mufti of Darul-Uloom, Deoband (U.P. India). My respected father رحمة الله عليه told me that some widows also lived around Mufti Sahib's house. It was his daily routine that when he set off from his house for the Darul-Uloom, he would call upon those widows and ask them if they wanted him to purchase anyting for them from the market which he would bring for them. The widows would, each, tell him their requirements of their kitchen and households, e.g. spices vegetables, etc. He would do their shopping and hand over their goods to them. Sometimes the widows would complain about the quantity, quality, or the very nature of their needs. Mufti Sahib would again go to the market and bring back the goods in the desired quantity and quality. After this voluntary service Mufti Sahib would go to the Darul-Uloom to write *Fatawa* (Rligious Rulings). My father رحمة الله عليه said:

The man who was walking about in the market for the sake of the widows was the Grand Mufti, yet after seeing his simplicity and humbleness none could say that he is a mountain of learning and virtues. It is the outcome of his modesty that so far his *Fatawa* have been published in twelve volumes and work on this is still in progress, and the entire world is receiving benefit from his work. It is so to say:

پھوٹ نکلی تیرے پیراہن سے بو تیری

Your fragrance has issued forth suddenly from your garment.

He breathed his last while writing a *Fatwa*.

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Qasim Sahib Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه and Modesty

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Qasim Sahib Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه is the founder of Darul Uloom, Deoband. It is written about him that he always wore a long cloth and an ordinary *Kurta* (Shirt). None could guess from his appearance and clothes that he was such a great personality. He was a successful debater. The greatest of his competitors dared not stand for long before him. As regards the state of his modesty, he used to sweep the courtyard of the mosque clad in his long cloth and ordinary *Kurta* (Shirt). He had taken part in the *Jihad* against the British in India so as a warrant of arrest had been issued against him and a man had come to arrest him. Someone had spied that the Maulana resided in the mosque of Chatta.When the man came to the mosque he saw that a person wearing a vest and long-cloth was sweeping the courtyard of the mosque. The warrant of arrest bore the words, "Maulana Muhammad Qasim

Nanotawi should be arrested." The man thought that the Maulana must be an Allamah of imposing personality clad in a long flowing robe who had headed such a tremendous movement. He could never imagine that the person sweeping the mosque was Maulana Qasim Nanotawi. He, therefore, asked this person about the whereabouts of the Maulana. In the meantime Hazrat Maulana's instuition guided him that a warrant had been issued for his arrest. The Maulana was now caught in a very confusing situation. He had to conceal his identity and yet he could not tell a lie. To get himself out of this awkward situation, he stepped back from the place where he was standing and said to the man. A little before the Maulana was here. The man thought that a little before the Maulana was in the mosque, but had left it and gone elsewhere.

Hazrat Sheikhul Hind رحمة الله عليه and Modesty

Hazrat Sheikh-ul-Hind Maulana Mahmoodul-Hasan is the man who launched such a vigorous freedom movement against the British Government of India as shook to the core of the whole of India, Afghanistan and Turkey. My respected father Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه related a story about him on the authority of Hazrat Maulana Mughis Sahib رحمة الله عليه An 'Alim of Ajmer (India), Maulana Mu'eenuddin Ajmeri رحمة الله عليه decided to go to Deoband to pay a visit to the Sheikhul-Hind. Accordingly, he reached Deoband and asked a Tonga driver to take him to Maulana Sheikhul-Hind. In Deoband he was know as *Bare* (big) Maulana Sahib. The Tonga-driver inquired: do you want to go to *Bare* Maulawi Sahib? The reply being in the affirmative, the Tonga-driver took him to the house of Hazrat Sheikhul-Hind. It was summer time, when this visitor knocked at the door, a man wearing a vest and a long

cloth, came out of the house. The visitor told the man at the door that he had come from Ajmer to meet Hazrat Maulana Mahmoodul-Hasan Sahib رحمة الله عليه and that his own name was Mu'eenuddin Ajmeri. He was let in and asked to take his seat. The visitor repeated his desire to see the Sheikhul-Hind. The man asked him to have patience. As the season was hot he began to fan him. The visitor asked the man with some irritation to inform the Maulana that a man had come from Ajmer to see the Maulana. He went in came out with food. The visitor told the man that he had not come to take food; he wanted to see the Maulana. The man requested the visitor to take the food and he would soon meet the Maulana. The visitor took food and drank water. Then the visitor complained with some irritation that the man was not informing Sheikhul-Hind of his visit. The man (who was Sheikhul-Hind himself) said to the visitor: Hazrat! No Sheikhul-Hind resides here. Mahmoodul Hasan is indeed the name of the man standing before you. This was the character of our elder saints. May Allah grant us some of this colour: *Aameen*.

Hazrat Maulana Muzaffar Husain Sahib رحمة الله عليه and Modesty

Hazrat Maulana Muzaffar Husain Sahib Kandehlawi رحمة الله عليه was once returning from some place to Kandehla by rail. When he got off the train at the station he saw that an old man was going with a heavy bundle on his head. He was walking with difficulty on account of the heavy load. Feeling pity on the old man the Maulana asked his permission to carry the load himself. The old man agreed to this and thanked the stranger for the help. The Maulana took up the bundle on his head and both set off on the journey. On the way the following dialogue ensued

between the two:

Maulana: Where are you going?

Old man: To Kandehla.

Maulana: Why are you going there?

Old man: I have heard that a great Maulawi Sahib resides there. I am going tomeet him.

Maulana: Who is that great Maulawi?

Old man: Maulana Muzaffar Husain Sahib Kandehlawi. I have heard that he is a very great Maulana and a big ʿAlim.

Maulana: Yes he can read Arabic.

While this dialogue was going on they reached Kandehla. When the people saw Maulana carrying a load, they rushed towards him to pay regard to, and take the load from him. Seeing this the old man was very much upset and shocked that he had burdened the Maulana with such a heavy load. The Maulana solaced the oldman, saying: Brother, there is nothing to worry. When I saw that you are in trouble, Almighty Allah helped me to render this service. Thanks to Allah.

Another event relating to Hazrat Sheikhul-Hind رحمة الله عليه

It was a regular programme followed during Ramazan at the place of Hazrat Sheikhul-Hind رحمة الله عليه Maulana Mahmoodhul Hasan Sahib رحمة الله عليه that the *Taraweeh* prayer was started after the ʿIsha prayer and continued throughout the night till dawn. The Qur'an was completed after every three or four days. A Hafiz recited the Qur'an and Sheikhul-Hind رحمة الله عليه listened to the recitation standing behind the Hafiz. He himself was not a Hafiz-e-Qur'an. At the end of the *Taraweeh* the Hafiz Sahib used to lie down for a short nap near the

Sheikhul-Hind. The Hafiz Sahib related that one night when he opened his eyes he saw that someone was massaging his legs. He thought that it might be some pupil or student. When he looked up after sometime he found to his great surprise that it was Hazrat Sheikhul-Hind himself who was massaging his legs. The Hafiz Sahib at once got up and asked what the Sheikh was doing. The Sheikhul-Hind رحمة الله عليه replied: You remain standing during *Taraweeh* the whole night. I am massaging your legs that they may receive some comfort.

Maulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Sahib Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه and Modesty

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ya'qoob Sahib Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه was the principal of Darul-Uloom, Deoband. He was a high-ranking 'Alim. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has said that when anyone praised him in his presence, he would keep quiet, instead of uttering some formal common words like, "It is your good opinion about me, otherwise I am nothing, etc.." Such formal words are uttered with a concealed desire to hear more praise. This is false and not real modesty. The man praising Maulana thought on account of his silence that he was pleased with his praise.An observer might have thought that the Maulana had no modesty. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه said: These formalities do not mean modesty. Modesty is a quality of the heart. True modesty demands that a man should not consider any work, however low, below his dignity.

Another event about him, demonstrating Modesty

There is another event relating to Maulana Muahmmad Ya'qoob Sahib Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه. Someone invited Maulana Sahib to a feast and he accepted it. The

village of the host was at some distance, but he provided no conveyance. Maulana Sahib رحمة الله عليه, therefore, set off for the place on foot. He did not at all mind the absence of conveyance. He took food along with mangoes. The host did not arrange conveyance even on Maulana's return journey and what is more, handed over to him a heavy load of mangoes to take home. Maulana accepted the gift of mangoes and set-off homewards with this heavy load. The load was too heavy for a man like Maulana Sahib who had never in his life lifted such a heavy load. To carry it he had to use both his hands alternately. When he approached Deoband both his hands had become almost paralysed. At long last he placed the load on his head. this brought some relief to his hands. At this he regretted that he did not place the load on his head in the very beginning to avoid all that distress. Maulana arrived home at Deoband with the load of mangoes on his head. He was supporting the load with one hand and shaking hands with the people who came to greet him with the other hand. The grand Maulana never thought that the work of carrying the load on his head was not worthy of his status. It is a token of modesty that man should never consider any work to be derogatory to his position.

An even Unique of its Kind

You might have heard the name of Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Kabir Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه who was among the most dignified saitns of Allah. A unique event happened with him which had happened to none else in the world. He had a great longing in his heart to visit the Holy Shrine of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. After long waiting and longing Allah at last granted him an opportunity to perform the *Hajj*. After *Hajj* he went to Madinah Munaw-warah. When he visited

the Holy Shrine of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, he spontaneously recited two couplets of Arabic poety:

في حالة البعد روحي كنت ارسلها
تقبل الارض عني وهي نائبتي

وهذه دولة الاشباح قد حضرت
فامدد يمينك كي تحظى بهاشفتي

That is: O Messenger of Allah! when I was at a distance from you I used to send my soul to kiss the earth on my behalf and as my representative. Today when I am present here in person, kindly; hold out to me your right hand that my lips may enjoy by kisisng it.

As soon as these couplets were recited, the sacred hand of the Holy Prophet ﷺ came out of his shrine and all present there graced themselves with its sight and Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Kabir Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه kissed the Prophet's hand. Thereafter the hand went back. This unique event is recorded in history and the reality is known to Allah alone.

The Remedy to cure Pride

After the happening of this event Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Kabir Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه thought of the great honour which Almighty Allah had conferred upon him which had not been conferred upon any person before. He feared lest this should create in his heart some vestige of pride. To forestall this he lay down at the gate of the Prophet's mosque and he requested the public on solemn oath to go out of the mosque by crossing over him, so as to remove all traces of pride and superiority from his heart. I have related this story only as an interlude, otherwise the main event which I want to relate is as follows:

The best Example of Public service

Once Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Kabir Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه was going to the market when he saw on the way a weak and sick dog suffering from scabies and unable to walk.

The righteous servants of Allah are always full of love for Allah's creatures. This love and affection is a sign to show that they maintain special relationship with Allah. Sheikh Sa'di رحمة الله عليه the famous Persian Sufi poet of Shiraz has expressed the same point in his persian couplet:

ز تسبیح و سجادہ و دلق نیست
طریقت بجز خدمت خلق نیست

The way leading to Allah is nothing, but service to the creatures of Allah. It does not consist in counting over the rosary, the prayer carpet and the saint's long ragged robe.

My Sheikh Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say that when a servant of Allah loves Allah and Allah also loves him, then Allah infuses into the heart of his servant the love of creatures. As a result the hearts of men of God become full to the brim of the love of Allah's creatures. So deep is their love that it is beyond our imagination.

When Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه saw this dog in such a sad plight he felt pity on it, he brought the dog with him, and provided for it medical treatment bandaged its wounds, until the dog recovered from its diseases. He looked after the dog with due care, being a God's creature.

Dialogue with a Dog

After the event mentioned above one day Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Kabir Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه was going somewhere and it was the rainy season. He was walking on the raised

path separating one field from the other, each filled with water and mire. Suddenly a dog appeared coming from the other side. Both stopped seeing each other, as the path was so narrow that both could not pass by each other. One of them must get down into the mire to let the other pass unsoiled. Hazrat Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه was in a fix what to do. It is said that a dialogue took place between the saint and the dog. Only Allah Knows how this dialogue became possible. None knows if it was a miracle worked by Allah or Hazrat Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه conceived it mentally. However, the dialogue runs thus:

Hazrat Rifa'i: Get down from the path so that I may pass on.

Dog: Why should I? You pose to be a great Wali (friend of Allah). A true Wali makes sacrifices for others. You are asking me to get down but why do you not get down yourself to let me pass on?

Hazrat Rifa'i: You and me. I am duty-bound and you are free from all obligations. I have to be clean to offer my prayers, but you are exempt from prayer. If my clothes become polluted by getting down the path I cannot pray in this condition. That is why I am asking you to get down the path to let me pass on.

Otherwise the heart will become polluted

Dog : Ha! what an excuse that your clothes will become polluted! you can clean by washing them with water. If I get down your heart will beocme polluted you will think that you are a man and far superior to a nasty dog. It is, therefore, better for you to save

your heart from pollution by getting down instead of saving your clothes.

Hearing this reply of the dog Hazrat Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه accepted defeat and admitted the dog's logic that the clothes could be cleaned by washing but the heart could not be cleaned by washing. He, therefore, got down in the mire and made way for the dog to pass on.

At the end of this dialogue an inspiration came to Hazrat Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه in which Almighty Allah addressed him thus:

"O Ahmad Kabir, today I have graced you with such wealth of knowledge as has no equal. A few days ago you had felt pity on a poor, sick dog by providing medical treatment for it. As a reward for this I have granted you, through the dog, peerless knowledge. "A man should not consider himself to be superior even to a dog."

Hazrat Bayazeed Bustani رحمة الله عليه

Hazrat Bayazeed Bustani رحمة الله عليه has been a great Muslim saint of international fame. It is related about him that after his death someone saw him in a dream and asked him how Almighty Allah dealt with him. The saint replied, saying: Something very strange happened to me. When Allah asked me about deeds I had taken with me there, I replied that I had nothing with me, I have come empty handed. I totally depend on Your mercy. Almighty Allah said: Out of all the good deeds you did in the world I appreciated very much one of them. When you got up one night you saw that a kitten was shuddering with severe cold, you felt pity on it and provided it cover under your quilt and the kitten passed the night comfortably. This act of yours was based on sincerity and you did it exclusively for the sake of My pleasure. It pleased Me so much that I granted

you forgiveness only on account of this deed.

Hazrat Bayazeed Bustani رحمة الله عليه has said that the learning and knowledge he had acquired in the world proved futile. Only one deed was counted as worthy in the sight of Allah. It was kindness to and nice behaviour with the creatures of Allah.

The gist of the discussion

Anyway, Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad Kabir Rifa'i رحمة الله عليه was instructed by means of this inspiration that the most valuable of all the learning is man's admission that he is "worthless" and that his own personality has no reality. This is the essence of all knowledge and is called "Modesty" - total freedom from Pride. All godly men take care to safeguard themselves from the vice of Pride in whatever form it may be.

The difference between "Modesty" and "Inferiroity Complex"

Nowadays the science of psychology has become very popular among the people. "Inferiority Complex" is a subject of this science which is regarded as something very undesirable. Medical treatment is provided for a person who falls a victim to this malady. Some people allege that the mystic formula of "modesty" or "selfeffacement" is only creating the feeling of "Inferiority Complex" among the people which is apparently not a desirable tendency.

It may be stated to clear that "Modesty" and "Inferiority Compelx" are two different traits of human behaviour. Those who evolved the science of psychology are totally ignorant of *Deen* (Faith), Allah and His Prophet ﷺ. They invented the term "Inferiority Complex", even though it has some good aspects as well. There is in

reality a difference between "Modesty" and "Inferiority Complex".

"Inferiority Complex" a complaint against creation

"Inferiority Complex" consists accusation against Allah's creation, A man suffering from this complex thinks that he has been deprived of something which should have been given to him and that he has been pushed back. He has not been given his due share. He was born ugly, poor, sick or crippled, etc. Such complaints necessarily create irritation and, in turn, jealousy. They create in him dependency and dejection. At any rate, "Inferiority complex" is based on a complaint against dispensation and ordinance of Allah.

Modesty is the product of gratitude

As regards"Modesty", it cannot be acquired by complaining against Allah's Decree. It is acquired through rendering thanks to Allah for His grants and favours. The man practising "Modesty" thinks that he did not deserve any blessings, but Almighty Allah favoured him by His mercy and grace.

Now you can realize yourself the difference between "Inferiority Complex" and "Modesty". The qulaity of "Modesty is highly desirable. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said "Modesty" raises to honour and dignity whoso practises it". As against this, pride ultimately brings disgrace and humiliation. The man practising "Modesty" is ultimately favoured with honour, provided he is true and sincere in his "Modesty".

Show of "Modesty"

Sometimes we make a show of modesty by using formal words like, "I am worthless, the lowest, sinful" etc. This is no Modesty; it is only a show of modesty; it is an illusion of "Modesty." Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has givern us a very effective formula to test the modesty of anyone. When a person says that he is worthless, wrongdoer, guilty and good for nothing, etc., confirm to him his statements, syaing, "yes, really you are what you are telling about yourself." Now see his reactions. If he does not take ill what you have confirmed he is really sincere in his claim of modesty. On the other hand, if he feels offended then be sure that he was making only a show of "modesty". He was using words of modesty with the intention that his listeners may contradict him, saying "No sir, you are very honourable, pious and modest, etc." This is not "Modesty, but a show of modesty."

Modesty and Ingratitude

A man's life possesses many good aspects. Some have been favoured with learning and knowledge, some with health, some with wealth and still some with high status. How can a man deny these blessings? If he denies these blessings, it will be ingratitude on his part. To steer clear of this situation the saints have suggested that "Modesty" should not be strained so much as to touch the boundary of ingratitude. Modesty and gratitude should go together. The one should not repel the other.

This is not Modesty

Hazrat Maulana Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has related an event in one of his sermons. He has stated that once he was

travelling by train and some passengers were sitting around him. As they were talking to one another, he could not sleep and came down from his berth. They sat down to take food and invited the Maulana also to it, saying: Kindly come and partake with us our poor and coarse food. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه objected to this that they were calling the food inferior which was Allah's gift. They replied that they called the food poor and coarse by way of modesty. It would be an act of pride to call the food to be of superior quality. The food was a gift from Allah. It was not at all right to call it poor and coarse. Likewise, if Allah has granted someone a blessing, one should be thankful to Allah for the valuable grant. The gift should not be taken lightly.

Refrain from Pride as well as ingratitude

On the one hand it is necessary for us to refrain from pride and on the other hand from ingratitude. We must refrain from both the vices. If there is man who offers prayers, observes fasting and thinks that he is doing something very praiseworthy, he is committing the sin of pride. If the same man thinks that his acts of pryaing and fasting are worthless and fruitless, this is an act of ingratitude in the sight of Allah.

How to combine Gratitude and Modesty

A question arises as to how to combine two virtues apparently quite different from each other - gratitude and pride at the same time. In other words, gratitude and modesty should go together. It is very easy to combine the two virtues. Man should think that he had no capacity at all to do this work which he was able to do only with the kind help of Almighty Allah. In this way both the virtues get combined. When man thinks that he is quite incapable

and good for nothing, he practises modesty. When he thinks that he did something only with the help and mercy of Allah, he is showing gratitude to Allah. A servant who is grateful to Allah can never be proud, because gratitude implies in its meaning admission of weakness and inability. If he has done anything or attained any success it was through Allah's help and mercy. See how the Holy Prophet ﷺ combined both the virtues in himself:

انا سيد ولد ادم ولا فخر(ترمذی، کتاب المناقب، باب نمبر۳، حديث نمبر ۳٦۳۲)

I am the leader of Adam's son yet, I take no pride in it. (Tirmizi..... ch. No: 3, Hadith No: 3632)

In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has claimed that he ﷺ is the leader of Adam's progeny. This implies admission of superiority, yet it has been set off at the same time by the denial of pride (ولا فخر). The Holy Prophet ﷺ admittedly deny pride that his status of leadership is due only to Allah's favour and mercy and not to any qualification in his own self.

An Example

Hazrat Maulana Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has explained this by an example. In the olden days there used to be a class of slaves. They were owned by their masters like some property. Their masters had full authority to sell them in the market. A slave was solely bound to obey his master. If the master asked him to become a ruler in his absence, he had to assume that responsibility. Nothwithstanding this, basically he remains a slave. He can never think that the power he is holding is due to his own ability and competence. He understands quite well that when the master returns and asks him to clean the latrine he will have to do that. Now it becomes clear that, although the

slave is officiating as a ruler, yet he realizes his real worth and position as a mere slave, having no authority, whatsoever.

A "servant's" position is below that of a slave

The position of a "servant" (بندہ) is much lower and inferior than a slave so when "Almighty Allah bestows some position upon His servant, he should think that the duty he is discharging is Allah's favour. He is a "servant" of Allah far inferior to the slave whom his master has authorized to work as a ruler. We know from the annals of history how many slaves there have been who ruled over countries, yet the spot of slavery remained sticking to them till the last.

A story full of morals

There was a slave who rebelled against his master, murdered him and took over the reins of the Kingdom. He continued as a King for a long time and princes were born to him. This slave King invited to his court Sheikh Izzuddin bin Abdus-Salam who was a *Wali* (friend) of Allah and a *Mujaddid* of his time. The slave King offered to appoint him Qazi (Chief Justice). The Sheikh replied: The right to appoint a Qazi vests in the rightful Caliph which you are not. You are a slave and have seized power by murdering your master. You have also seized much landed property to which you, as a slave, have no right. A slave cannot own any property. I shall, therefore, not accept any post from you, unless you rectify your position.

In those days goodness prevailed. The slave King had usurped power by murdering his master, yet he had some fear of Allah. The saint's words had also impressed him. He admitted the charges levied against him by the

Sheikh that he was really a slave. He requested the Sheikh to tell him how he could extricate himself from the bonds of slavery. The Sheikh told him that there was only one way: The King as well as his princes should all stand in the market and offer themselves for sale. The sale money should be distributed among the heirs of the deceased master, i.e. the ousted King. Then the buyer should free his purchased slaves. Then the slave King and the princes would become free. How difficult a situation it was! However, some fear of Allah and of the punishment of the Hereafter, as the slave King had in his heart, he accepted to go through this ordeal.

It is a unique event of history that the King and his progeny taken to the market and offered for sale. They were auctioned. A rich man purchased them then set them free in return for an adequate compensation. Thus the Kingdom of the King was regularised. We have in our history such evetns the like of which will not be found elsewhere in any other nation. The lesson to be learnt from this unique event is that just as a slave King realizes that he is basically a slave, in the same way if a man is holding some dignified post, he should believe from the core of his heart that he is a slave of Allah. If man realizes this truth, he can never do wrong to others, while occupying his high and dignified post.

Modesty in Worship

Allah helps you, by His mercy, to become a *Namazi* (worshipper), do not begin to tell others that you are a *Namazi*, nor think, that you have become a very great saint as says the Arabic proverb:

صلى الحائك ركعتين وانتظر الوحي

A weaver once offered two *Rak'ats* of prayer and

began to wait for a revelation from above. He foolishly thought that his act of praying was so sublime that he should receive revelation from Allah. You should, therefore, not regard your acts of worship so great that you should anticipate great results immediately, nor should you consider your act so inferior that you may become involved in ingratitude, by thinking that it is totally worthless and condemnable.

It is dereogatory to the sanctity of your prayer to utter derogatory words. You should be thankful to Almighty Allah that with His help you could perform the prayers whatever its worth and level.

You must do two things

Whenever Allah enables you to perform some worship you have to do two acts. Firstly, render thanks to Allah that He enabled you, by His mercy, to worship Him. How many men there are who remain away from this worship. Secondly, seek Allah's forgiveness for the faults you may have committed, and the defects and shortcomings that may have crept into your worship. It is hoped that on account of these two acts Allah shall accept your worship.

Ecstatic experiences and feelings are not the objective

We always feel worried that we find no change in ourselves, nor do we experience any spiritual elation, although we have been offering prayers counting over the beads, rememebring Allah's sacred names alongwith the *Tahajjud* and *Ishraq* prayers. You must bear in mind that these internal feelings of elation are not the objective. The good deeds you are doing, including those mentioned

above, are in themselves a great favour of Allah. The anxiety about the acceptance or non-acceptance by Allah of your good actions, remembrance, prayer, etc. is quite appreciable, yet it should be realized and admitted that they are not in themselves worthy of being offered to, and accepted by Allah. Notwithstanding this you should also hope that when Allah has helped you to do these acts He will, by His mercy, accept them for reward.

A sign to indicate the acceptance of worship by Allah

Haji Imdadullah Sahib رحمة الله عليه was a great Sheikh. May Allah exalt his rank! A man who was a regular *Namazi* asked him if his prayers were accepted by Allah or not. The Sheikh replied, saying: If your first prayer had not been accepted you would not have been allowed the second, then the third then the fourth and so on so forth. When you have done a good deed and Allah helps you to do it again, then it is a clear indication that Allah has accepted the first deed by His infinite mercy. One should, therefore, never consider his praying and fasting to be altogether inferior and insignificant.

An event that occurred with a saint

Maulana Rumi رحمة الله عليه has related in his Masnawi the story of a saint. He was a very religious and pious man who had been offering prayers, observing fasts and remembering Allah and in other forms of worship. One day it occurred to him that he had devoted himself to Allah's worship for such a long period, but he did not receive any response from Allah so far about the acceptance or non-acceptance of his devotion. He submitted this thought to his Sheikh. The Sheikh reprimanded him and explained to him you have

been continuously doing your deeds of righteousness and devotion with Allah's help and this is a response from Allah to you. If Allah had not accepted your devotion and worship, He would not have extended His help to you to continue your prayers and fastings, etc. It is not, therefore, necessary to wait for a response which is already there.

کہ گفت آں اللہ تو لبیک ماست
زیں نیاز دورو و سوزک ماست

The idea contained in this persian couplet is that if a man is rehearsing the names of Allah, then this rehearsal of Allah's name is Allah's response that man is enabled to rehearse the name of Allah again and agian and repeatedly.

The best Example

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ used to give a very good example to illustrate how Allah accepts the worship of his servants. Hazrat Dr.Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has suggested, saying: Go to a man and speak well of him. Do the same the second day and the third day.If he appreciates this act of yours he shall listen to you and will not forbid you to praise him. On the other hand, if he dislikes this act of yours he may tolerate you the first or the second day, but will surely turn you out the third day and will not allow to praise him. Just like this, when you praise Allah and He allows you to continue this praise of Him, this is a sure sign that Allah appreciates your act, even the act may be of an inferior standard. So, do not look down up this act as worthless, but thank Allah's magnanimity for accepting something which is in fact not worthy of this acceptance.

The gist of the entire discussion

Our respected Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to advise us to continue working in the path of Deen according to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In addition, we must render thanks to Allah that He who enabled us to do something good and right, as without His help we could do nothing. Then when we rememebr our fautls, sins and shortcomings we should seek Allah's forgiveness. If we follow this advice, we will be able to do justice to "Modesty" in our conduct, and offer gratitude to Allah and as a result we will be saved from pride.

How to acquire the quality of "Modesty"

In order to acquire the quality of "Modesty" you should regard yourself to be a servant of Allah and think that you are bound to do whatever Allah entrusts to you. If He appoints you to some high post resolve that you shall discharge the duties attached to that post honestly, because you are a slave of Allah and have no discretion of your own in the matter. You must admit that whatever you have been granted is Allah's gift and favour. Such trend of thought will ensure for you the quality of gratitude as well as of modesty.

The respected *Sufis* (mystics) say that the *'Arif* (knower of the ways of Allah) has the ability of combining opposites which are apparently contradictory to each other. On the one hand you should not look down upon your good deeds and on the other hand you should not pride yourself upon them. You should think that, in so far as your acts are concerned, they are worthless, but in so far as Allah's attribute of acceptance is concerned, they are indeed valuable. By adopting such trend of thought you shall attain Modesty as well as the qulaity of gratitude.

Practise gratitude to the best of your ability

Our Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه laid great stress on the virtue of rendering thanks to Allah. The more one renders thanks to Allah, the more easily and quickly he will be cured of his inner and spiritual diseases. Previously we could not grasp the secret of these poitns. Now we have come to know that this virtue of thanks giving is a very effective remedy to cure the inner diseases of our hearts. He رحمة الله عليه used to say that people now-a-days are too weak in body and soul to go through the ordeals of those spiritual exercises and disciplines which the students of spiritual training used to perform in the past under the direct supervision of their Sheikh and underwent great hardships in this path. We have neither time nor strength for this tiring ordeals. Only one way is open for you and that is the way of rendering thanks to Allah as much as possible. This will create in us the virtue of "Modesty" and expel from our hearts the vice of pride. This will also lead us to the path of total cure from the inner diseases.

The meaning of Gratitude

When "thanksgiving" is so important we must understand the meaning of "thanks". Thanksgiving or gratitude is a belief that we are indeed not deserving of anything. Whatever we receive or attain comes to us only through Allah's grant or favour. This is what we call "Modesty". There is neither modesty nor gratitude in the belief that you deserved the success or the grant by dint of your own efforts and labour. Take an example. A debtor pays back his loan to the creditor. The creditor is not bound to thank the debtor for this payment, because the amount was legally and morally due to the creditor. By paying back his debt the debtor did not oblige the creditor

with any favour. Thanks become due where a man receives some benefit or favour which he does not deserve or to which he has no title. At the time of rendering thanks to Allah for a favour you must realize that you did not deserve the favour; it was only Allah's favour and grant. By following such a trend of thought you shall attain the virtue of "Modesty". The Holy Prophet ﷺ has made a promise to a man who practises "Modesty" in the following words:

من تواضع لله رفعه الله

> Allah raises him to honour and dignity who practises Modesty for the sake of Allah.

Summary

It should be borne in mind that "Modesty" is a quality of the heart. A man should think in his heart that he is worthless and good for nothing. To be able to preserve this trend in the heart, in actual practice one should think that it is modesty that one should be ready to do anything and should not consider any job below his status and dignity. He should be ready to handle any duty, however, lowly it may be. There should be no vestiges of pride and arrogance in man's sitting, standing, walking, in fact, in any of his movements. His conduct should always reflect modesty and humbleness. This is not total Modesty, yet this too is a means to attain total modesty. In short, a man should take to modesty even in his apparent acts and movements, which in turn will sow the seeds of gratitude and modesty in the heart.

May Almighty Allah create the virtue of Modesty in our hearts-*Aameen*.

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 41

JEALOUSY - A FATAL DISEASE

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue	:	Jame' Masjid Baitul-Mukarram Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi
Date	:	18th June, 1993.

JEALOUSY - A FATAL DISEASE

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيأت اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلى اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

عن ابى هريرة رضى الله تعالى عنه ان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم قال:

" ايا كم و الحسد، فان الحسد ياكل الحسنات كما تاكل النار الحطب، اوقال: العشب" (ابو داود، كتاب الادب، باب فى الحسد، حديث نمبر ٤٩٠٣)

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek his forgiveness and believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our souls and the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom He guides and there is

none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah the only One Who has no partner. I also bear witness that our master, our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah shower His mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی الله عنهم and bless them in great abundance.

"Jealousy" is an Inner Diseasae.

We are aware that among our apparent acts Allah has appointed some as *Farz* (obligatory duty), some as compulsory and some as sins. Exactly in the same way among our inner acts, many are *Farz*, and many others are sins and totally forbbidden. To refrain from these inner sins is as imperative as to refrain from our apparent major sins. Some of these have already been discussed. Today I want to dsicuss a very dangerous inner disease which is "Jealousy". In the Hadith recited before you just now, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned this disease. The Hadith may be translated as follows:

Hazrat Abu Hurairah رضی الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Refrain from jealousy, because it consumes the good deeds of man just as fire consumes wood or grass. The narrator is doubtful whether the Holy Prophet ﷺ had used the word "wood" or "grass". The Hadith means that just as fire totally eats up dried grass or dried wood, in the same way the disease of jealousy eats up the good deeds of the jealous persons.

The Fire of Jealousy remains in flames

There is a kind of fire which destroys everything in a matter of minutes.. There is another kind of fire which burns without flame but slowly and slowly eats away things in bits, till it consumes the entire wood. Likewise is jealousy which, just burns without fire, and annihilates man's good deeds stealthly and does not even feel this hidden process of loss. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ has emphatically warned against this disease.

It is an obligatory duty to refrain from Jealousy

If we make a survey of the conditions prevailing in our society, we shall see that this disease of jealousy has encircled the entire society. There are a very few servants of Allah who are safe from it. Jealousy is so insidious a disease that somehow it finds access to the hearts. At the same time it is an obligatory duty to refrain from it at all costs. As for ourselves, we take no notice of this dangerous situation and do not even feel that we are suffering from this disease. It is, therefore, highly imperative to be cautious against the onslaught of this disease.

First of all we should try to understand the reality of jealousy, its categories, its causes and the remedy to cure it. These four issues are the topic of today's discussion. May Almighty Allah make today's discourse instrumental to the eradication of this disease.

The Reality of Jealousy

A man sees that another man is in possession of some blessing whether of this world or of the Hereafter. A grudge and ill-will springs up in him against the man gifted with the blessing. He begins to desire that the blessing of the other man may be snatched away from

him. This is the reality of jealousy.

Take an example. Allah has bestowed upon some man wealth, good health, fame, honour or learning. A burning feeling crops up and starts imagining as to why this blessing was granted to him and that the blessing should better be taken away from him. It pains him to see another man in possession of one or many of these blessings and he is happy if some of these blessings are lost or snatched away from him.

Keeping in view this reality of jealousy if you reflect a bit you will feel that the jealous person raises objection to Allah's Decree as to why He bestowed that blessing upon another person, instead of him. It is a very serious sin that he is taking exception to the Omnipotent Providence and is at the same time wishing that the blessing granted by Allah to the other person may be seized from him which is too grievous a sin.

To 'envy' is lawful

Sometimes a man sees that another man is in possession of some blessing. A desire arises in his heart that he may also get that blessing. This desire is not jealousy; it is 'envy' for which the Arabic equivalent is غبطه. Sometime this word حسد is also confessed with the Arabic (Jealousy). For example, a man sees that a fellow man is in possession of a nice house, a lucrative post or erudite knowledge. Now he desires that he should also acquire these blessings. This desire is not jealousy; it is "envy". When this desire is accompanied by a desire that these blessings possessed by others may be seized from them, then it becomes the sin of jealousy.

Three Degrees of Jealousy

There are three degrees of jealousy. The first degree is the springing in the heart of a desire that you may get the like of a blessing which another person possesses. It is better that you may get the blessing without depriving the other person of his possession. If this is not possible, then the blessing of the other person may be taken away from him and given to you. This is the first degree of jealousy. The second degree of jealousy is that the blessing in the possession of some other person may be snatched away from him and given to you. This degree consists of two aspects. Firstly, the blessing may be taken away from its owner and secondly, that it may be given to you. The third degree of jealousy is in the desire that the blessing may be taken away from its owner along with the status and honour which he is enjoying by virtue of this blessing, whether that the blessing is passed on to you or not. This is the worst and most heinous degree of jealousy. May Almighty Allah protect us all from this. *Aameen*!

The First soul that committed the sin of Jealousy

The first to take resort to the sin of Jealousy was Iblis (Satan) when Almighty Allah created Hazrat Adam عليه السلام He announced that He was going to appoint him His vicegerent. Thereafter He commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam عليه السلام. Iblis felt offended at this command and refused to obey the command of prostration. Satan was thus the first to commit the sins of jealousy and pride.

The inevitable consequences of Jealousy

It is an inevitabel consequence of jealousy that if the victim of jealousy suffers from some harm or loss or faces

grief, the jealous person exults over the victim. Conversely, if the victim happens to receive some blessing in the form of money or success or in getting some important job, the jealous person feels annoyed and sad. Feeling pleasure at the distress of someone is called in the Arabic language (شماتت)

This is also a kind of jealousy. The Qur'an and the Ahadith have condemned this vice at many places. The Qur'an says:

اَمْ يَحْسُدُوْنَ النَّاسَ عَلٰى مَآ اٰتٰهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ (سورة النساء: ٥٤)

This means: Or are they jealous of mankind because of that which Allah has bestowed upon them out of His bounty?

See how the jealous feels angry at Allah's grant and favour.

Two causes of Jealousy

There are two causes of the birth of this inner disease in a man. The first is the love of worldly wealth and property and status. It is a natural wish of a man to see himself in a respectable and dignified position. If another man supersedes him in the acquisition of wealth, property or status, the jealous fellow tries to bring him down. The second cause is hatred and malice. A man harbouring hatred and malice against anyone feels joy if the latter is afflicted with some distress, but feels offended and sad when the latter has some occasion of joy and satisfaction. A heart filled with these two vices must generate jealousy.

Jealousy leads to ruin both in this world and in the Hereafter

Jealousy is so dangerous an inner disease that not only does it destroy man's Hereafter but it also leads to destruction of man's interests and affairs in this world. Obviously a man wishing ill of others is always afflicted with mental torture and suffocation, particularly when he finds someone advancing towards success and happiness, which affects the health of the jealous person adversely.

The Jealous man keeps burning in the fire of his jealousy

Jealousy is just like fire. It is a natural property of fire that it eats up its fuel like wood or grass as long as it is available. When this fuel is exhausted, the fire begins to eat its own other parts until the fire gets extinguished. Exactly like this is the fire of jealousy. The man addicted to jealousy first tries to harm others with his jealousy, when he is unable to harm others, he perishes by burning internally in the fire of his own jealousy.

Remedy for the disease of Jealousy

The man suffering from the diesease of Jealousy should realize the truth that Almighty Allah has distributed His blessings in the world according to His wisdom and dispensation. If He has granted the blessing of wealth to one person, He has granted the blessing of good health to another eprson. Again, if He has granted the blessing of honour and dignity to one person, He has granted the blessings of beauty and charm, peace and tranquillity to other persons. There is no man in this world who has not been granted some blessings to enjoy or has not been afflicted with some distress and diseases

from which he is suffering.

The Three Worlds

Almighty Allah has created in this Universe three worlds. One world is the world of Paradise which is full of endless bliss, joy and luxuries. There is no place in Paradise for distress, pain disease, worry and sorrow. May Allah admit all of us into it *Aameen*!

The second world is totally opposed to Paradise and that is Hell. It is full of grief, distress torment and all forms of torture and punishment. It has no trace of ease and comfort. May Allah protect us all from this world of torture, trial and tribulation. *Aameen*.

The third world is the world on which we live. It is a world which is a combination of the first and the second worlds. It has in it happiness as well as sorrow, comfort as well as trouble, and honour as well as disgrace. There is none in this world who can say that he has never had in his life any difficulty or trouble. There is also none here who can claim that he has never tasted in his life ease and comfort, joy and bliss. In this world every joy is tampered by sorrow and every sorrow is seasoned with a taste of joy. Totally pure and unmixed comfort and joy or distress and sorrow cannot be conceived in this world.

Who enjoys real comfort?

Almighty Allah has created this world with His wisdom and His own scheme of dispensation. He has distributed in this world different bounties to different persons, out of wealth, health, respect and honour, etc. Now the wealthy man is jealous of the healthy man and the latter is jealous of the former, grudging each other's gift. This distribution is indeed according to Allah's

Decree and depends on divine decision. Nobody can say who is really happy and who is sad; who is at ease and who is in trouble. We see that there is a mill-owner, possessing many bungalows, luxurious cars, servants and workers. On the other side there is the poor labourer who labours hard from morning till evening for scanty wages with which he makes both ends meet with great difficulty. This labourer will covet the luxurious life of the mill-owner. If we peep into the inner lives of the two we shall find that all is not gold that glitters and the reality is quite different from what it appears. For example, the mill-owner with all his wealth, bungalows, cars and attendants cannot sleep in his bed without taking sleeping pills. He has all the delicacies of food beautifully arranged on his dinning table, but he is not able to enjoy even a few morsels, because he is sufering from ulcer and has been advised by the physicians to abstain from rich foods. Now see, a rich man having all the comforts and luxuries of life can enjoy neither food nor sound sleep. As compared with this mill-owner, the poor labourer who, having worked hard for eight tedious hours, eats his fill the coarse food available to him and falls into sweet sleep. He gets up from his sleep after eight or ten hours. Now consider which of the two is happy and comfortable? Who is enjoying true and peaceful comforts? If you look closely into this situation, you will see that, while Allah bestowed upon the mill-owner all worldly resources and luxuries, He bestowed real peace and comfort upon the poor labourer. As already pointed out, these are all dependent on Allah's Decree and dispensation.

Sustenance is one form of blessing and to benefit by it is another form

My respected father, Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه once advised us to recite the following *Du'a* (supplication) after taking meals:

الحمد لله الذى اطعمنى هذا ورزقنيه من غير حول منى ولا قوة،

غفرله ما تقدم من ذنبه (ترمذى شريف، ابواب الدعوات، باب مايقول اذا فرغ

من الطعام، حديث نمبر ٣٥٢٣)

> This means: All praise is for Allah Who has made me eat this food and has provided it for me without any effort and labour on my part. All his past sins (i.e. the minor ones only) will be forgiven who recites this *Du'a* after taking meals. (Tirmizie .... Hadith No: 3523)

Thereafter, my respected father رحمة الله عليه told us that in this narrative the Holy Prophet ﷺ has uttered two words, each separately. The one is رزقنيه (He has granted me this sustenance) and the other اطعمنى (He has made me eat it) When both the words have almost the same meaning, a question arises as to why they have been mentioned separately. Then he himself answered the question. He said that availability of sustenance is one independent blessing and the ability to eat that sustenance is another independent blessing. Sometimes all sorts of delicious foods are available in the house together with choicest fruit, but there is no appetite because of indigestion and because the physician has advised against eating anything. In such a situation رزقنا (He has granted me the sustenance) holds good but اطعمنا (He has made me eat it) does not hold good. Allah has granted sustenance but has not gratned the ability to eat it, as there is disorder in the digestion.

Anyway, Allah has distributed His bounties among His creatures, differing from individual to individual, not at random but according to a pre-planned scheme and measure.

Allah's Decree

To get rid of the sin of jealousy, the jealous person should consider calmly that if Allah has gratned some valuable blessing to a man which is the cause of jealousy, how many blessings the jealous person has been granted which the other person has not been granted. It is just possible that the jealous person has been granted better health or beauty and charm which the other man has not been granted. Allah's dispensation and providence are not at random; they are based on a pre-ordained divine plan. Thinking on these lines will mitigate the pressure of jealousy.

An Urdu proverb

There is a very common proverb of the Urdu language which means: Allah does not provide finger-nails to a bald-headed, so that he may not injure his head by scratching it with the nails. Likewise, it is just possible that if a man was given wealth in a large measure, he was liable to expose himself to punishment by the misuse of that wealth. If Allah does not grant anyone the blessing of wealth, this is in view of some justification known to Allah. Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an:

وَلَا تَتَمَنَّوْا مَافَضَّلَ اللّٰهُ بِهٖ بَعْضَكُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ (سورة النساء: ٣٢)

And do not covet the bounties in which Allah has made some of you excel others. (4:32)

The reason for the command that you should not

covet the blessings which Allah has granted to some and withheld from some others is that it is Allah alone Who Knows the wisdom of His dispensation. It is quite possible that if you are granted what you wish, it may not be beneficial for you and may be harmful to you. You should, therefore, always think that the distribution of blessings made by Allah is according to the Divine Decree. To be jealous of anyone for what he has been gratned is to challenge Allah's Decree. This is due to ingorance. It is quite possible that the jealous person may have some blessing which the other person may not have been granted.

Look at the blessings in your possession

The cause of this vice lies in man's tendency to look at others instead of looking into his own position. He does not take into account the many blessings of Allah granted to him nor does he render thanks to Allah for these grants. Instead, he looks with a jealousy on what has been granted to others. If man forms the habit of looking at the countless bounties being showered upon him from morning till evening, he will have no jealousy.

Look of those who are below and inferior to you

Now in our society people have become very fond of making research and investigation in respect of others' affairs. For example, we are always trying to find out how such and such person is receiving large amounts of money, is building a large house and purchasing a car and so on so forth. As a result of this investigation if we find something attractive with someone, the instinct of jealousy is excited. To ward off such a situation, it is necessary to follow the maxim which has been mentioned earlier and is reproduced below.

"In worldly matters always look at those who are below you and inferior to you. In matters relating to Deen (Faith) always look at those who are above you and superior to you."

Hazrat Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمة الله عليه and comfort

Hazrat Abdullah bin Mubarak رحمة الله عليه has related that he lived for a long time in the sector of the rich and had neighbourly relations with them. During those days none was more dejected and sorrowful than myself. Everyone that he saw he found that his clothes, carriage, house, etc. were much better than those of his own. This had placed me in an inferiority complex. Afterwords I changed residence and shifted to the sector of the poor. I lived among those poor people and had intimate dealings with them. This change brought relief to me. Here the situation was just the opposite. I saw that everyone else in that sector was below and inferior as regards clothes, conveyance and house, etc. were concerned. Consequently Allah granted me hearty comfort and satisfaction.

Desires are endless

Remember that if anyman desires to collect the resources of the world, there will be no end to his desire. The more he collects the more he will hanker for them, as says the Persian line:

کارِ دنیا کسے تمام نہ کرد

There is none who has been able to satisfy his desires for the worldly resources.

Go to the richest man of the world and ask him if he has acquired all his desired objects. He will reply that he requires a great deal more. He will desire to add more and

more to his worldly possessions. The famous Arabic poet Mutanabbi has said something very wise about this world:

وما قضى احد منها لبانته
ولا انتهى ارب الا الى ارب

(ديوان متنبى. قافية الفاء، قال يرثى اخت سيف الدولة صفحه ٤٨)

This means: So far nobody could fill his belly with worldly riches. As soon as a wish is fulfilled, another wish arises.

This is because every wish gives rise to another wish. Similarly, every need gives rise to another need.

This is Allah's Dispensation

How far and how long will you go on committing the sin of jealousy at the blessings and possessions of others? You are sure to find men around you who are superior to you in one blessing or another. The best course open to you is to reflect that this is Allah's dispensation which Allah has made according to His wisdom and expedience which we cannot understand. Our range of reflection and thinking is very much limited as compared to Allah's wisdom. It encompasses the entire universe. It is He who decides how to distribute the bounties among the people; whom to grant a beauty and from whom to withhold it. If man reflects on this, the tendency to jealousy will be eradicated.

Another remedy for the disease of jealousy

There is another very efficacious remedy for the disease of jealousy. The patient of jealousy should think that his desire that someone's blessings should be snatched away from him has always the opposite effect. On the other hand the victim of jealousy stands to gain in this world as well as in the Hereafter. When you have made him your enemy he

will, by the law of nature, be happy at your grief and distress. When you are in trouble and grieved on account of your jealousy, your enemy will be pleased with your sad plight. This is your enemy's gain in this world. As regards his gain in the Hereafter, the more you are jealous of him the more the balance of his good deeds will increase in the Record of his Deeds. As he has been wronged by your jealousy, his rank in the Hereafter will be raised. It is an inevitable characteristic of jealousy that it incites man to backbiting, finding fault, slandering and many other grievous sins. The result is that the good deeds of the jealous person are snatched away from him and credited to the balance of deeds of the victim of jealousy. Thus, the more you are jealous of him, the more you add to his good deeds. If a jealous man commits jealousy throughout his lifetime, he will lose all his good deeds to the benefit of the victim of jealousy.

An event that happened with a saint

Once a visitor told a saint that such and such person was speaking ill of him. The saint kept quiet and did not say anything in reply. At the end of the meeting when the saint went home, he arranged to send a valuable gift to the man who was reported to have spoken ill of him. The people asked the saint to tell them the reason for this strange dealing. The saint satisfied them by saying: He is my well-wisher, spekaing ill of me he has enhanced the balance of my good deeds. Thus he has done me good and I should repay that good. He has helped me in the Hereafter by increasing my good deeds and I have compensated him for this in this world by sending him some gifts.

Imam Abu Hanifah's refraining from Backbiting

It is well-known that none could commit backbiting in the assemblies of the Imam رحمة الله عليه. The Imam neither himself indulged in backbiting, nor did he listen to backbiting. His asemblies always remained free form this sin. One day Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifah رحمة الله عليه was explaining to his pupils the vices of backbiting. He told them that backbiting is such a grievous sin that it results in the transfer of the good deeds of the backbiter to the account of the victim of backbiting. That is why, said the Imam, he did not backbite anyone. If he were to backbite anyone he would backbite his own parents, so that the parents could receive benefit from the Imam's good deeds.

In this account, there is an indication that according to his belief the backbiter is wishing ill of others, but he is actually benefitting the victim of his backbiting in this world as well as in the Hereafter. At the same time he is causing harm to himself and putting at stake his own interests. How foolish is it then to indulge in backbiting!

Another event concerning Imam Abu Hanifah رحمة الله عليه

Hazrat Sufyan Sauri رحمة الله عليه was a contemporary of Hazrat Imam Abu Hanifah رحمة الله عليه. Both used to hold assemblies to deliver lectures and sermons. Once someone asked Hazrat Sufyan Sauri رحمة الله عليه of his opinion about Imam Abu Hanifah رحمة الله عليه. Hazrat Sufyan Sauri رحمة الله عليه told him that the Imam was a great miser. The man said with surprise that the Imam was renowned to be a very generous saint. Hazrat Sufyan Sauri said: the Imam is so miserly that he is not ready to pass on any of his good deeds to others, yet he secures for himself the good deeds of others. How does it happen? People backbite him and

speak ill of him. As a result, their good deeds are transferred to the Imam's account. As for himslef, neither he backbites, nor does he listen to anyone's backbiting. Thus he does not forego any of his good deeds in favour of others. So, from the point of the Hereafter, there is none more miser than he رحمة الله عليه

In fact the man who backbites, or is jealous of anyone is transferring his good deeds to the victim of his backbiting and jealousy by depleting his own stock of good deeds.

Who is a real Pauper

It occurs in a Hadith that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked his Companions رضی الله عنهم: Who is a pauper. The Noble Companions رضی الله عنهم replied: A pauper is one who has no money. He ﷺ said: He is not a real pauper. A real pauper is one who leaves this world with a large collection of good deeds including prayers, fasts, Allah's rememberance, etc. When on the Day of Judgment he shall stand before Allah to render accounts, he shall find a large crowd of men demanding compensation from him for thier rights which this man had usurped. As is well-known, there will be no currency note in the Hereafter to pay off debts. The currency of the Hereafter is the good deeds of a man. Allah shall command that the good deeds of the man may be passed on to the claimants. As a result of this command, one man will take away his prayers, another one his fasts, someone will take away his remembrance and rehearsals, etc., and all his good deeds will beocme exhausted, yet their claims against this man will still remain unpaid. In such a situation Allah will command that the claims of the creditors may be paid off by adding to his account the sins of the claimants. When he appeared on the scene his Record of Deeds was full of

good deeds, but at the time of leaving the place not only is the bag of his good deed emp ̣ , but he is taking with him the burden of sins committed by others. Therefore, this man is a real pauper. (Tirmizi..... Hadith No: 2533)

If Allah bestows, by His mercy upon anyone a heart clean and spotless like a mirror, altogether free from the filth of jealousy, malice, grudge and backbiting, he will be raised to a very high rank, even though he may not have in his Record of Deeds many optional prayers and virtues of remembrance and rehearsal, etc.

Glad tidings of Paradise

Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr bin al-As رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that once they were sitting in the Prophet's mosque with the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ said: The man who will enter the mosque from this side will be an inmate of Paradise. When they looked that way, a man soon entered the mosque, while ablution water was dripping form his face and he was holding his shoes in his left hand. The Companions رضی اللہ عنہم very much envied him that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had given the glad tidings that he shall enter Paradise. At the end of the assembly Hazrat Abdullah bin Amr bin al-As رضی اللہ عنہ desired to see from a near distance the fortunate man. He wanted to find out his actions on account of which the Holy Prophet ﷺ had given the glad tidings that he would enter Paradise. So when the man was returning home Hazrat Abdullah رضی اللہ عنہ also followed him. On the way Hazrat Abdullah رضی اللہ عنہ asked the man for permission to live with him for two or three days. The man gave him permission. At night when Hazrat Abdullah رضی اللہ عنہ went to his bed he did not sleep at all, in order to observe the actions of that man. He saw that he did not get up at night for the *Tahajjud* prayer; he got up only for the *Fajr* prayer. Even in

the day he did not do any particular act in the form of *Nawafil* (optional prayers) remembrance, etc. He, however, used to resort to the mosque for his five time regular prayers. Hazrat Abdullah رضی اللہ عنہ did not observe any particular act from him. However, he told him how the Holy Prophet ﷺ had given for him glad tidings for Paradise. He was glad to hear this and admitted that he did not devote himself to any special act of worship. He, however, told Hazrat Abdullah رضی اللہ عنہ that he never harboured any hatred, malice or jealousy against anybody. It occurs in certain narratives that it was Hazarat Sa'd bin Waqas رضی اللہ عنہ who had been given advance information about their being inmates of Paradise.

His gain and My loss

You have seen that there was nothing special in the actions of the Companion رضی اللہ عنہ mentioned above. He had no *Nawafil* and acts of remembrance in his record. He, however, maintained his heart clean like a mirror, free from all traces of jealousy malice and grudge, etc. So far as jealousy is concerned, the jealous person should think that the victim of his jealousy is considerably gaining, while he is going in great loss. This trend of thought is expected to diminish the malady of jealousy.

A third remedy for the disease of jealousy

As has already been mentioned, the root cause of jealousy lies in the love of the world and of worldly power and pelf. The third remedy, therefore, consists in man's banishing from the love of the world and of worldly power and pelf, pomp and show. To be able to do this man should keep in view that this world is short-lived and transitory and he may die any time without prior notice. He shall enter the

world of the Hereafter, leaving behind all his wealth, honour, dignity pelf and power, pomp and show. His salvation will depend only on his good deeds and freedom from visible sins as well as inner. These are the three remedial steps by which man can get rid of this malady.

Two kinds of jealousy

An important point to be noted here that after Knowing the vices of jealousy, sometimes it occurs to the mind that the malady of jealousy is born in the heart unintentionally. When a man sees that some of his colleagues, friends or companions are promoted and made to supersede others, then an urge of jealousy and grudge arises spontaneously that the man has risen in status and remuneration. This happens all of a sudden and quite innocently without any pre-planning. How to ward off such a situation?

Note carefully that one kind of jealousy is that the jealous person desires that the blessing which a person has been granted may be taken away from him. Along with this desire, the jealous person speaks ill of the person concerned and tries to find fautls with him in meetings of his friends and colleagues. He does this in orer to degrade his victim in the sight of others. He also desires in various ways that the victim of jealousy may be deprived of this blessing. This kind of jealousy is totally unlawful and forbidden.

Sometimes an urge to jealousy arises in the heart, but the jealous person does not express this urge to anyone, either by words or by signs or actions, nor does he speak ill of the victim nor backbite him. He also neither desires nor acts that the blessing may be snatched from its owner. He only feels a pinch at the grant of the blessing to his colleauge. In reality this too is the sin of jealousy, but

it can be overcome with a little care.

Seek pardon atonce

When the pinch of jealousy is born, one should at once condemn it as something too heinous and seek Allah's pardon for it. It should be attributed to the seduction of the self and Satan and considered as an evil. Thus, when the urge of jealousy is accompanied with the pinch of its evil also, the sin will be washed off.

Pray for the victim of jealousy

Our saintly elders have advised when you get jealous and envious on someone's blessing, pray to Allah in favour of the victim of his jealousy. No doubt you will find it very painful and piercing to indulge in such a prayer, yet it must be done without prejudice. At the same time you must pray to Allah for yourself that may Allah relieve you of the evil of jealousy. In short, one must do these three things:

1- Condemn exclusively the pinch you get at one's blessing and the desire that it may be lost from its owner.

2- Pray in favour of the victim of jealousy that Allah may preserve his blessing and grant him more.

3- Pray to Allah in your own favour that He may, by His mercy, purify your heart from the sin of jealousy.

Even after taking these three steps, if the urge to jealousy is felt unintentionally and spontaneously, it is hoped that Almighty Allah shall not call you to account for this. On the other hand, if you do not condemn the urge as an evil, nor do you try to resist it and atone for it, the sin may not be pardoned.

A clarification about usurpation of Rights

It has been repeatedly mentioned that it is easy to discharge those rights which are due to Allah. Pardon for them can be obtained by repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah. As regards rights due to the servants of Allah and wrongs done to them, they cannot be excused merely through repentance, unless the claimants excuse them or the wrongs done are made good.

If you express by your tongue the urge of jealousy against anyone and backbite the victim of jealousy or do something to harm him, this will beocme an offence and a wrong against a servant of Allah. The offence of the wrong will not be remitted, unless the victim pardons it. On the other hand, if a man feels jealous of anyone but keeps it in his heart and does not disclose it to anyone, nor does he take any practical steps to deprive the victim of his blessing, then in such a situation the sin of jealousy is between the jealous man and Allah. It can be forgiven by Allah after repentance. The jealous person should, therefore, understand that as long as the sin remains concealed, it is easy to have it pardoned and made good. If the sin crosses this limit, then it becomes an offence against the servant of Allah and it becomes almost an impossibility to secure forgiveness for it.

It is also not good to go on envying anyone too far

As has been mentioned just now, if there is no desire in the heart that someone is deprived of his blessing, but the jealous man only desires that he too may be granted that blessing, then this is called envy. Although this does not come within the definition of jealousy. Yet to ponder over it too much leads one to jealousy gradually. If anyone envies another person for his wealth and property, this too is not

desirable, because "envy" sometimes begets in the heart a lust for wealth and property and thus "envy" turns into jealousy.

It is good to envy anyone in the matter of *Deen*

If the urge to envy is born on account of enthusiasm for *Deen* (Faith), this is desirable. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in a Hadith:

"لا حسد الا فی اثنتین، رجل اتاه الله مالا فسلط علی هلکته فی الحق ورجل اتاه الله الحکمة، فهویقضی بها ویعلمها" (صحیح بخاری کتاب العلم، باب الاغتباط فی العلم والحکمة، حدیث نمبر ۷۳)

(Jealousy) has been used in this Hadith in the sense of envy. In fact envy is permitted in two things. It is good to envy that person whom Allah has favoured with wealth and he spends it in the path of Allah and deposits the reward for the sake of his salvation in the Hereafter. This man is worthy of being envied for his righteousness. The second is that man whom Allah has favoured with knowledge and he is spreading the light of his knowledge and learning with his speeches and writings. He is himself doing good deeds and is including others to do the same. Those who are impressed by his preaching and teaching and begin to follow *Deen* will thus reform themselves. Their reward for all good deed will also be added to the account of this second man. It is desirable to envy a righteous man in his righteousness and try to surpass him.

Envy is not desirable for the sake of the world

It is, therefore, not desirable to envy anyone, because he has much wealth and property and worldly honour and dignity. Envying one another too much in such worldly pelf and power ultimately creates lust which

may in turn, give birth to jealousy. This trend needs to be discouraged. If such a thought ever occurs this should be dismissed by recollecting that if one person has been granted one blessing another person has been granted another blessing and Allah's dispensation is based on wisdom and justice. If you have not been granted some bounty it is in your own interest, although you may not uderstand the secret of it which is known only to Allah. If that blessing had been bestowed upon you, it is not unlikely that it might have brought to you some misfortune.

May Allah help us understanding these poitns and principles about jealousy and save us from its curses. *Aameen*!

A Shaikh and Guardian is needed

As I have mentioned repeatedly, it is necessary to secure the services of a spiritual physician or a Shaikh to get rid of the inner diseases like immorality, pride, jealousy, etc. The physician examines his patient and explains to him the nature of fever, its causes and the medicines to cure it. The patient may preserve these details in his memory when the patient has an attack of fever can he treat his fever with the medicines and the method of treatment he has preserved in his memory? Certainly he cannot do so. The symptoms differ from time to time and from patient to patient and he may misjudge in the selection of the medicines.

Just like the open physical diseases, are the inner spiritual diseases like hypocrisy, jealousy, malice, and pride. You have been told the reality of these diseases. When a man catches any one of these inner diseases he should submit himself for treatment to an experienced physician of inner diseases and tell him frankly the details of his disease

to enable him to prescribe the correct treatment.

Sometimes it so happens that a man has no disease, yet he thinks that he is a patient, suffering from some disease. Conversely, sometimes a man thinks that he is hale and hearty, but in reality he is a sick person. Sometimes the sick person takes a wrong treatment other than the treatment needed to cure his disease. Basically it is necessary to seek the services of a Shaikh for the treatment and cure of his inner disease and follow his advice in the minutest details.

May Almighty Allah help us all in taking the right course. *Aameen.*

و آخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 42

VALUE OF DREAMS IN THE LIGHT OF THE *SHARI'AH*

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue	:	Jame' Masjid Baitul-Mukarram Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi
Date	:	24th September, 1993.

THE VALUE OF DREAMS IN THE LIGHT OF *SHARI'AH*

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيات اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلىٰ اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

اما بعد

فاعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم، بسم الله الرحمٰن الرحيم.

عن ابى هريرة رضى الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لم يبق من النبوة الا المبشرات قالوا: وما المبشرات قال الرؤيا الصالحة

(صحيح بخارى، كتاب التعبير، باب المبشرات حديث نمبر ٦٩٩٠)

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him. We seek His help and His pardon. We believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our selves and from the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom Allah guides and there is none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, the One. He has no partner. I also bear witness that our master, our authority, our Prophet and our sire, Muhammad ﷺ, is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah send mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی اللہ عنہم and bless them and salute them all a great deal.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: The chain of Prophethood has terminated for ever and nothing of it has remained, except the "*Mubash-shirat*" (مبشرات). The Companions asked: O Messenger of Allah! what are *Mubash-shirat*? The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied, saying: True dreams - they announce glad tidings and form a part of Prophethood. The Holy Prophet ﷺ also said in another Hadith that a believer's dream is one forty-sixth part of Prophethood.(Sahih Bukhari ..... Hadith No: 68987)

True Dreams are a part of Prophethood

When the time of the Holy Prophet's ﷺ commission as a Prophet drew near, in the beginning he ﷺ did not receive any *Wahi* (Revelation) for about six months. During this period he had only true dreams. It occurs in the Ahadith

that whenever he ﷺ had a dream during this period, it came true and clear as day light. This continued for about six months till he began to receive the *Wahi* (Revelations). After his appointment as a Prophet he ﷺ lived in this world for twentythree years. Out of these twentythree years, the period of the first six months was a period of true dreams only. By multiplying twentythree by two (23x2), we get fortysix (46). In other words if we divide the period of Prophethood by fortysix, we get six months during which the Holy Prophet ﷺ had only true dreams, and no *Wahi*. On this hypothasis the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that a believer's dream forms the forty-sixth part of Prophethood. There is also an indication that this process would continue after him ﷺ. The believers will have true dreams containing glad tidings. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also said in a Hadith that during the period close to the Day of Judgment, the Muslims will generally have true dreams. All this goes to prove that dreams too are a blessing of Almighty Allah through which men receive glad tidings. So, if anyone receives some glad tidings through a dream he should render thanks to Almighty Allah.

Two opinions about Dreams

In our society people entertain extreme opinions about dreams. There are some who do not believe in the existence of true dreams,nor do they believe in the truth of their interpretation. This is not right.You have just now learnt that, according to a Hadith, true dreams form fortysixth part of Prophethood and that they are announcers of glad tidings. On the other extreme there are men who attach great importance to dreams and regard them as a means to salvation and superiority. Men place their trust in a person who happens to have a true dream. Sometimes the

person having true dreams thinks about himself that he has become a great saint. These dreams come upon men during sleep. Sometimes Almighty Allah shows his servants some sights during their waking time. In the mystic terminology this is "*Kashf*", meaning ability to see hidden things through spiritual light. If someone by chance has "*Kashf*" the common people think that the man is a great saint, even though this man may not be following the path of the *Sunnah* during his waking hours. Bear in mind that the criterion of a man's superiority and righteousness does not lie in dreams and "*Kashf*". The real criterion for this depends on whether or not a man's living is according to the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If a man's living during his waking hours is not according to the *Sunnah*, if he is not refraining from sins, nor is he obeying Allah, he is not a righteous person, whatever the numbers of supernatural feats displayed at his hands. Nowadays people have become awfully misguided in this matter. This display of miraculous or supernatural feats is considered an inseparable part of the mystic system of spiritual education and training. Ignorant men are always hankering after true dreams, disclosure of hidden secrets (*Kashf*) and supernatural performances.

The status of Dreams

Hazrat Muhammad bin Sireen رحمة الله عليه has been one of the most dignified *Tabi'een* (followers of the Companions). He was considered as Imam in the art of interpreting the meaning of dreams. There is no equal in this field among the entire Muslim *Ummah*. He had been endowed by Allah with an outstanding faculty for the interpretation of dreams. Many wondedrful feats are related about him in this field. A very small and meaningful sentence from him about interpreting dreams

is worth remembering. He رحمة الله عليه has said:

الرؤيا تسر ولا تغر

This means: Dream is a phenomenon which should be pleasing but it should not throw anyone into deception.

If a man has a true dream, he should not be tempted to think that he has become a very accomplished saint, so as to become, in turn, unmindful of the duties to be discharged during his waking hours.

Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه and interpretation of Dreams

Many persons visited Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه to inquire of him the interpretation of their dreams. In reply Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه generally recited this Persian couplet:

نہ شبم نہ شب پرستم کہ حدیث خواب گویم
من غلام آفتابم ہمہ ز آفتاب گویم

"I am neither the night nor the worshipper of the night that I should tell things about dreams. I am the slave of the sun (the Holy Prophet ﷺ) and can speak only about the sun. If a man has a true dream with some glad tidings he should be grateful to Allah, because he may possibly get the blessing of the dream. One should, however, not take dreams as a criterion for superiority and saintliness."

Hazrat Mufti Sahib رحمة الله عليه and *Mubash-shirat* (that brings glad tidings)

There are many persons who used to have dreams about my respected father رحمة الله عليه. They used to intimate their dreams in writing. My respected father رحمة الله عليه had all these dreams recorded in a register. On the first page of this register he had himself written in his own handwriting

the following paragraph.

"In this register I am recording those dreams which the righteous servants of Allah have seen about me. I am recording them because they contain glad tidings and good omen. May Allah correct me by virtue of these dreams. I am, however, warning all readers that they are not a criterion for superiority and righteousness. No decision should be taken about me on the basis of these dreams. The real criterion is the acts and dealings of man during his waking hours. Men should not fall into deception on account of these dreams.

The intention from recording this was to save people from falling into deception. This is the reality of dreams. When a man has a happy dream, he should thank Allah and pray to Him to turn the dream into reality and favour to him. He should have no misunderstanding about the dream either in his own favour or in the favour of any other person. This is all that a dream really means. There are two or three more Ahadith concerning dreams of which the people are not aware.It is useful to study these Ahadith also.

Satan cannot assume the image of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

عن ابی هریرة رضی الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلم:

من رآنی فی المنام فقدر انی لایتمثل الشیطان بی

(صحیح مسلم، کتاب الرؤیا، باب قول النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم: من رآنی فی المنام)

Hazrat Abu Hurairah رضی الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Whoever sees me in a dream does really see me, as Satan cannot assume my image (Saheeh Muslim).

It is a great blessing for a man who sees by the grace of Allah the Holy Prophet ﷺ in a dream. A man who sees

the the Holy Prophet ﷺ in a dream in the image and form which have been described and stand proved in the Ahadith, surely sees only the Holy Prophet ﷺ and nobody else. Satan canot deceive anyone, because he cannot assume the Prophet's image. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned this as a special peculiarity concerning his ﷺ image and appearance before anyone in dream.

It is a great fortune to have a glimpse of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

By His grace, Almighty Allah grants many persons the good fortune of seeing the Holy Prophet ﷺ in dreams. Our elder saints have had different attitudes towards this blessing. The attitude of one group is that special efforts are made to get this opportunity by going through various spiritual exercises and disciplines which have been devised and prescribed for this purpose. For example, rehearsal of the sacred *Darood* so many times and certain other exercises on Friday nights are considered effective in this matter. There are other exercises and practices in vogue among the public for winning this fortune. If anyone indulges in these exercises and disciplines to win this blessing, there is no objection.

Where is the qualification for this "meeting"

There are some other saints who take a different attitude towards this issue. A gentleman used to visit my respected father رحمة الله عليه. Once he expressed to my father his burning desire to see the Holy Prophet ﷺ in a dream and asked him for some spiritual exercise for this. My father said to him: My dear brother, you are indeed a very ambitious man that you have this auspicious desire. I do not have the courage to entertain this desire, because I

think that I do not deserve this honour, I, therefore, never thought of learning and doing such exercises and disciplines to have a meeting with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in a dream. Even if I am graced with such a meeting how can I do full justice to the required etiquettes? That is why I did not aspire for the honour of this meeting. If Almighty Allah Himself graces me with this meeting it will be His great favour to me. In that case He shall teach me the requisite etiquettes also. However, just like any other believer, I too bear a desire for this. Anyway there have been varying attitudes towards this matter.

Hazrat Mufti Sahib and a visit to the sacred shrine of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

I have related to you this incident of my respected father even before. He told us that he could never approach the metallic network around the Prophet's shrine. He would not face the network but would stand close to a pillar in front of it. If there was a man he would stand behind him. One day he told us:

"Once it occurred to my mind that perhaps I was a callous-hearted man that I could not dare approach the sacred network of the Prophet's shrine, when the majority of the visitors reach it and thus attain nearness to the Prophet's ﷺ soul, which is a great blessing and honour. Thereafter, I felt as if I was hearing this voice coming from the shrine:

He who follows my *Sunnah* is close to me, even though he may be thousands of miles away from me. On the other hand, he who does not follow my *Sunnah* is far away from me, even if he is sticking to my network.

It is the deeds done during the waking hours that count

The real worth lies in following the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The true blessing consists in following the path of the *Sunnah*. This is the true criterion for nearness to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is an act of audacity to go near and stick to the nets and be heedless of the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is not good to hanker after these dreams, yet it is a blessing from Allah if they prove auspicious and bring some glad tidings. The main source of success and salvation depends on following the *Sunnah*. These dreams do not help in raising the rank of anyone nor do they help in earning reward of the Hereafter. So we should ameliorate, and take care of, our actions, conduct and behaviour during waking hours.

Let not a good dream deceive you

If anyone has a dream in which he finds himself strolling in the gardens of Paradise, it is a good omen, but he should not think that he has got a passport to Paradise and that he has been exempted from doing anything. This is a misleading notion. If after having a dream a man becomes more active in following the *Sunnah*, this is an indication that the dream was true and messenger of glad tidings. On the other hand if he becomes slack in his actions, he has been deceived by the dream.

What should be done if the Holy Prophet ﷺ commands in a dream to do something

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that, if anyone sees him ﷺ in a dream he truly sees him ﷺ, because Satan cannot assume the Prophet's image and form. If the Holy Prophet ﷺ commands during a dream for doing any deed

which does not contravene the injunctions of the *Shari'ah*, then the command should be obeyed with due care and attention. This dream should be regarded as genuine and true. To ignore the instructions received in this dream may prove to be inauspicious and harmful.

A dream does not serve as a proof in the matter of the *Shari'ah*

If in a dream the Holy Prophet ﷺ commands to do something which does not fall within the jurisdiction of the *Shari'ah*, it must be noted carefully that such a command received through a dream must not be acted upon. Almighty Allah has not ordained things seen in dreams to serve as proofs in issues concerning the *Shari'ah*. As regards the Ahadith which have come to us through authentic sources, the injunctions contained in them must be obeyed. It is not necessary to comply with injunctions received through dreams. It is right that Satan cannot assume the image of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, but sometimes the things seen in the dream get mixed with the dreamer personal thoughts or are distorted on account of his weak memory, so dreams do not serve as proofs.

A strange event concerning a dream

There was a Qazi (Judge) who used to decide cases referred to him for judgment. A case was submitted to him for decision. The Qazi heard the case, examined the witnesses and made up his mind about the final judgment to be announced in a day or two. In the meantime in the night he saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ in a dream. The Holy Prophet ﷺ did not, so felt the Qazi, concur in the Qazi's judgment but advised him to change his judgment. When the Qazi awoke from sleep and reconsidered the details of the case

thoroughly, he felt convinced that the Holy Prophet's judgment did not fit with the framework of the *Shari'ah*. The issue took a very serious turn. The Qazi could not decide what to do.

The Qazi called on the Caliph and told him in detail his predicament due to this strange dream. In order to resolve the difficulty, a meeting was arranged of all the Ulama of the capital and the problem was put before them. The Ulama feeling convinced of the genuineness of the dream were inclined to decide the case according to the direction of the Holy Prophet ﷺ received through the dream. A great savant and learned man of his age Hazrat Izzuddin bin Abdus Salam رحمة الله عليه was also present in the meeting. He was regarded as a *Mujaddid* of his time. He stood up and addressed the meeting as follows:

It is my considered opinion that the case should be decided according to the provision of the *Shari'ah*. I am in favour of a judgment which is according to the *Shari'ah*. I take all the responsibilities for the sins, if any, invovled in this judgment. It is not lawful to decide a case in the light of indications contained in a dream. We are required to obey only those directions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which have come to us through reliable authorities. So, the case should be decided according to the injunctions of the *Shari'ah*, and not to the directions received in a dream.

Injunctions of the *Shari'ah* about Dreams and "*Kashf*", etc.

It requires a great courage of conviction to say: I take all responsibilities for sins, if any, invovled in this judgment. Allah, however, sends such brave and dauntless souls for the protection of His *Deen*. If it is accepted even once that the injunctions of the *Shari'ah* can be changed

through dreams, then the *Shari'ah* would go with the wind in no time. How many ignorant "*Pirs*" (guides) and "Professors" there are who claim miracles! The term "*Kashf*" means bringing to light hidden secrets by spiritual insight, but its authenticity is not recognized in the *Shari'ah*. So, the rules of the *Shari'ah* cannot be replaced or amended through these processes.

An event that happened to Hazrat Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمة الله عليه

The Head of the saints, Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani رحمة الله عليه was one night busy with his worship. It was *Tahajjud* time. At this time a very dazzling light shone from one side and a voice emerged from it saying: O Abdul Qadir! you have done full justice to My worship. Now you have reached such a high station that from now onwards you are exempt from all sorts of worship for My sake. You are now exempt from *Prayers*, *Fasting*, *Hajj* and *Zakah*. Now do whatever you please. We have reserved Paradise for you. No sooner did Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani hear these words, than he replied to the voice in these words: Get lost! O accursed fellow. Neither the Holy Prophet ﷺ, nor his Noble Companions رضى الله عنهم were exempted from this prayer. How can I get exemption from it? With these words the Sheikh expelled Satan from his presence. A much brighter light shone in the wake of the earleir light from which His voice emerged: O Abdul Qadir! your learning came to your rescue today, otherwise with this strategem I have ruined many grand saints. If you had not possessed this learning you too would have been ruined to day. The Sheikh retorted, saying: O accursed Satan! you are deceiving me again! It was Almighty Allah and not my learning that saved me. The learned have observed that the second Satanic strategem

was more dangerous than the first one. In the second one Satan wanted to deceive him by trying to create in him the pride of learning. The Sheikh, however, was saved from this attack by Allah's mercy.

It is not lawful to refute a Hadith with a Dream

This is a very dangerous trend of a conduct. Nowadays people have become very fond of dreams, '*Kashf*', supernatural feats, revelations, etc. They do not care to know the requirements of the *Shari'ah*. Quite educated and religious persons have begun to claim that they have come to know by means of '*Kashf*' that such and such Hadith is not right and that certain Ahadith of Bukhari and Muslim were forged by the Jews. If '*Kashf*' is attained and interpreted in this way the very foundation of *Deen* shall be jolted. May Almighty Allah shower His mercy on those Ulama who were entrusted with the task of protecting our *Deen* and they proved true to the task. They are the protectors and defenders of *Deen*. These Ulama have declared in clear terms that neither dreams, nor '*Kashf*' nor supernatural feats can be regarded as proofs in matters concerning *Deen*. The basis of proof are those injunctions and directions which are proved to have been received from the Holy Prophet ﷺ during his waking hours and through authentic narratives. It is advised that we should not rely on dreams, '*Kashf*', revelations and supernatural feats. Hazrat Maulana Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has said that '*Kashf*' is a phonomenon which is sometime seen coming from madness and even infidels. So, we should never be deceived by experiences like beholding some light, "running" of the heart or its pulpitation, etc., etc. These things have absolutely no place and credence in the *Shari'ah*.

What should a Dreamer do?

Hazrat Qatadah رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: A good dream is from Allah and a bad dream is from Satan. So, when a man has a bad and undesirable dream he should make a spitting gesture on his left side three times and recite this:

اعوذ باللہ من الشیطٰن الرجیم

He should also change the side on which he was sleeping, while having the dream. Then this undesirable dream will do him no harm - God wiling. Some times man has a frightening or otherwise some disgustful dream. At such a time he must follow this advice of the Holy Prophet. If he has a pleasant dream with a promise of some worldly or spiritual promotion or gain he may inform his kins and wellwishers such dream and not to others. A careless stranger may give an incorrect interpretation and it is said that the first interpretation generally comes true which may turn harmful. The dreamer should, therefore, disclose the dream only to his well-wishers and should thank Almighty Allah for all that.(Sahih Bukhari....... Hadith No: 6986)

To pray for the man who has a dream

When anyone informed the Holy Prophet ﷺ of his dreams, it was his ﷺ routines practice to recite this *Du'a*:

خیرًا تلقاہ وشرًا توقاہ، خیرلنا وشرلا عدائنا

This means: May Allah grant you the good of this dream and protect you from its evil. May this be good for us and bad for our enemies.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has combined in this *Du'a* many good things. If anyone comes to you and tells you his dream, pray for him in these words. If you do not remember the

Arabic words you may recite it in your own mother tongue.

In short, these are the etiquettes, values and possible effects of dreams which should be kept in mind. We should keep away from false notions about dreams which are prevailing among the people.

May Almighty Allah save us all from these vices and help us to take the right course of *Deen*. *Aameen*.

و آخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 43

SMARTNESS - A REMEDY FOR LAZINESS

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue : Jame' Masjid Baitul-Mukarram
Gulshan-e-Iqbal,
Karachi

Date : 24th September, 1993.

SMARTNESS - A REMEDY FOR LAZINESS

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه، ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيات اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالىٰ عليه وعلىٰ اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

اما بعد

فاعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم، بسم الله الرحمٰن الرحيم

والذين جاهدوا فينا لنهدينهم سبلناؕ وان الله لمع المحسنين (العنكبوت، ٦٩)

امنت بالله صدق الله مولانا العظيم

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek his forgiveness and believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek

refuge with Him from the evils of our souls and from the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom He guides and there is none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah the One who has no partner. I also bear witness that our sire, and our authority and our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah have mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی الله عنهم and bless them and salute them all in great abundance.

"As for those who strive in Us, We surely guide them to Our paths. Allah is indeed with the righteous. (29:69)

Cure Laziness with "Courage"

Recently I have been on tours to different cities of Burma. During these tours I had to address many gatherings, sometimes at the rate of five per day. By chance tomorrow I am booked for a visit to the Haramain Sharifaiyn (the two sacred Mosques). As a result of tiredness it occurred to me that there was no harm in missing my address on one Friday more when I had already missed it the last Friday on account of my foreign tours. At the same time I remembered an advice of Hazrat Doctor Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله علیه. Once he said:

When you are feeling laziness in carrying out some routine practice, that is the very time of man's test. There are two alternatives. Surrender yourself to the feeling of tiredness and obey your self's demand. In such a situation you will become used to surrendering yourself to the demand of tiredness and laziness, until you become a

habitual sluggard.

The other alternative is that man should resist the attack of laziness with courage and do the job which he is inclined to put off on account of his laziness. As a result of this blessed effort on his part Allah will help him to carry out all his routine duties with ease and regularity.

These two Principles are the essence of *Tasaw-wuf* (Mysticism)

On such occasions Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to read to us a statement of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه which is worth rememebring. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه often said:

"When you feel lethargic in obeying some command resist the lethargy and obey the command. Similarly, when you feel tempted to commit a sin, resist that temptation and refrain from that sin. This is the essence of *Tasaw-wuf* (mysticism). When you reach this stage nothing more is needed. This creates in the heart "relationship with Allah", then strengthens it and develops it.

Anyway, there is only one way of getting rid of laziness and that is to resist it with courage. It is wrong to think that the Sheikh shall prescribe for you some formula to cure laziness. Resistance is the only remedy to cure laziness.

Tempt the "self" to do the right work

Hazrat Dr. Abdu Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say that we should tempt and induce our "selves" to work. Thereafter, he related to us an incident of his own. He said: One day when I got up at night for the *Tahajjud* prayer, I felt very much depressed and lethargic. I was inclined to think that being advanced in age, indolent and tired there was no harm in missing the *Tahajjud* prayer,

one night, when it was neither obligatory nor compulsory. As against this, the Sheikh also thought: Although these excuses seem to be quite plausible, yet it is the blessed time when Allah accepts the supplications of his servants. When one-third of the night has passed, Allah's mercy descends on the earth and an announcement is made on behalf of Almighty Allah: Is there anyone to beg forgiveness that I may forgive him? I, therefore, thought that it was not proper to waste such precious hours. Then I addressed my "self" in this way. All right, do not offer the prayer, but get up and make some supplication, sitting on the bed, then fall into sleep again. I at once got up from sleep and began to make the supplication. During supplication I again tempted my "self" in this way: When you have disturbed your sleep, go to the latrine, clean yourself then sleep comfortably. After coming back from the latrine and cleaning myself I was disposed to perform ablution as supplication with ablution is more likely to be accepted by Allah. I, therfore, performed ablution, sat on my bedding and started *Du'a*. Then I told my "self" : The bedding is not a fit place for *Du'a* there. With this argumentation I dragged the "self" to the prayer-cloth. Then I made "intention" for two *Rak'ats* of *Tahajjud*.

The Sheikh told that in this way the "self" has to be tempted to take the right course and do its work. He advised further: When the "self" plays tricks with you, you should also play tricks with it. It is hoped that by the blessing of this strategem, Almighty Allah will assist us to take right course.

What will you do, if you receive a call from the President?

Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to advise us on this issue in the following style:

You have drawn up a programme for your reciting the Qur'an and for the *Nawafil* (optional prayers), etc., but sometimes you are tempted to violate this programme on account of laziness . On such occasions you should try to train your "self". One way of doing this is to argue with it, saying: All right, this time you are feeling lethargic and you are not inclined to get up from your bed, but what will you do if you receive a message from the President of the country to call upon him, only because he wants to grant you a valuable prize or appoint you to a high post. Will you take the plea of laziness and tiredness on such an ocasion? Will you refuse to respond to the call, because you are feeling sleepy? There is hardly a man who will not be overjoyed at such an invitation and will not shake off his laziness to rush to receive the President's favour.

If the "self" responds to the Presidential call with the promptitude, it only means that there is no genuine excuse to respond to the call of Allah. You should consider for a while how promptly you are preparing to respond to the call of a worldly dignitary, i.e. the President, who is inviting you to receive a prize or a post, although he is himself extremely weak and helpless. On the other hand, the King of Kings, the Omnipotent, Creator, Nourisher, Provider, Giver and Snatcher is inviting you and you are making false excuses of laziness and tiredness to turn down His call. How unjust it is! If you try to cure the malady of laziness by thinking in this way, you can get rid of it.

Do not put off till tomorrow what you can do today

Sometimes a man feels inclined in his heart to do a good deed, but his "self" deceives him by suggesting that the good deed may be done "tomorrow". Beware that this

is the seduction of the "self". "Tomorrow" will never come. It is, therefore, necessary that you must do it today, rather immediately, what you propose to do tomorrow. It is not certain that you will get time or there will be the urge for doing the work tomorrow. None knows whether the circumstances will be favourable or you will be alive tomorrow. Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an:

وَسَارِعُوْٓا اِلٰى مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْاَرْضُ

(سورة آل عمران: ١٣٣)

> Rush to the forgiveness from your Lord and for a Paradise as wide as the heavens and the earth (3:133)

I was telling you that I was feeling tired today, but when I remembered these directions of my Sheikh رحمة الله عليه, I became active and courageous to present myself here before you.

I attend these meetings for my own gain

I come here for my own gain. Allah's servants assemble here with good intentions and desires. I too receive blessings from them. In fact, when the servants of Allah get together for the sake of *Deen* (Faith) at a place, they receive reflections of blessings from one another. I always attend these meetings with the intention of receiving my share of the blessings radiating from these pious men.

What is the use of those moments?

When Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi رحمة الله عليه was confined to his death-bed, his physicians had strictly forbidden him to see, or talk to anyone. One day when he was lying down on his bed with his eyes closed, he suddenly looked up and desired to see Maulawi Muhammad Shafi

Sahib رحمة الله عليه ie., my respected father. Hazrat Thanawi Sahib رحمة الله عليه had entrusted to my father the compilation of "Ahkam-ul-Qur'an" in the Arabic language. When my father appeared before him رحمة الله عليه he said: you are compiling the "Ahkam-ul-Qur'an". Just now it has occurred to me that a certain injunction can be deduced from a certain verse of the Holy Qur'an which I have not seen anywhere earlier. When you come to that verse, you should include this injunction also. After having said these words he closed his eyes and lay down. Look here! The Sheikh is lying down on his death-bed, yet his mind is occupied with the Holy Qur'an and the explanation of its verses. After a short while he again opened his eyes and called for another person. When he came the Sheikh asked him to do something. When this process continued for sometime, the manager of the *Khanqah* (monastery) and a close friend of the Sheikh reminded him of the strict instructions of his physicians not to indulge in conversation. In reply the Sheikh said:

You are right, but I consider those mometns of life which are not spent on some body's service - are a waste.

Worldly High offices and Positions

The office of "serving humanity" is something very wonderful. May Almighty Allah create in us love for service. Try to become a public "servant" and serve humanity. Create in yourself an urge to serve others. Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to explain the dignity of service by an example. It is very difficult to succeed in attaining a position you desire. It is not in your power to become the President of the country, or its Prime Minister, an Assembly member or any other similar high office. You cannot secure with ease a good post, unless you cross so many hurdles, like submitting applications, giving

written and oral tests, facing interviews and passing through so many other hurdles. If after crossing successfully all these hurdles you succeed in securing a post, you have to face the jealous eyes of many, their enmity and conspiracies, so that you may be deprived of the post secured with so many tests, trials and torments. Thus, it is neither in your power to attain a position, nor to maintain it.

Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمه الله عليه offered to tell his disciples a high office which is easy to secure and also to maintain it. None shall be jealous of you, nor will anyone dispute with you about it, nor can anyone suspend or discharge you from it. It is the office of a خادم (servant). It is in your power to secure this office for which no application, no voting and no election is needed. None will envy you for this, nor dismiss you from this offie. So become a "servant" of your household, your wife, your children, your friends, acquaintances neighbours, and the pious men. Whatever you want to do, do it with the intention of service. If you are delivering a sermon, composing or compiling a book or doing any other work of general utitlity, do it with the motto of "service". The entire difficulty lies in being حاکم (the Master) but there is ease and comfort in being a 'servant'. The Sheikh himself claimed to be a 'servant' a servant of wife, children, disciples, and acquaintances. This is an 'office' which is to a great extent free from the whisperings of Satan. Self-esteem, pride and superiority complex are born in respect of offices which are regarded as grand from the worldly point of view. As regards the office of a 'servant', it has no trace of superiority and glamour. Therefore, try to secure this unprecedental 'office'.

The benefit of attending on Saints and Sheikhs

I was telling that today I was feeling tired and a bit indisposed. However, I suddenly remembered the directions of my Sheikh and I gathered courage to say something before this honourable gathering. This is one of the benefits of establishing and maintaining contacts with the pious saints. Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to favour us with his valuable advice on his own free will without any request from us. Now those directions are proving beneficial to us on one or the other occasion with suitable timings.

That topic become your property

Hazrat Dr Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say: some people want to commit to memory every word that is spoken in assemblies, but this is not always posisble. Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه related to his own case in the following words:

Whenever I was present in the assemblies of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه I desired to write down the sayings of the Sheikh. Some persons did so, but I could not do that, because I was slow in writing. One day I complained to Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه that I could not write down his sermon nor could I commit them to memory. To this complaint of Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه replied: There is no need to write down my speech. Why do you not begin yourself to dictate your saying ? Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه was very much upset to hear this remark, as he did not feel that he was qualified for that Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه went on saying: If there is something true and is based on sound understanding and thinking which your heart has accepted then that becomes your property. It does not matter if you are not able to retain it in your memory word by word. It will recur to your memory in the nick of time and by the mercy of Allah you will be enabled to act upon it.

It is desirbale to attend meetings of righteous elders and to listen to their sermons. They pour into your ears useful and wise point of guidance and righteousness, which impress human mind and are revived in the memory on proper occasions.

To thrust points of advice into the ears

My respected father, Hazrat Dr. Shib and Maulana Masihullah Khan رحمۃ اللہ علیہ were righteous God-fearing men. I had contacts with them. By virtue of my contacts with these saints of Allah I have been greatly benefitted. They thrust into my ears points of wisdom and piety of their own free will without any demand or request from my side. Thereafter, good points are revived to my memory on occasions when they are badly needed. It is a great blessing to attend meetings of elders and to listen to their sermons. Today these pious saints are not living amongst us but they have left behind their sermons, advices and directions in the form of written books. It is highly beneficial to study these books.

May Allah help us in maintaining our spiritual contacts with these godly men. *Aamen*

Difference between "Excuse" and "Laziness"

I advise you to resist laziness whenever it overpowers you and to complete your daily routine and acts of devotion at all costs. There is a difference between "Excuse" and "Lethargy" or "Laziness". If one misses some routine practice on account of some genuine excuse, there is nothing to worry. When Almighty Allah Himself does not take us to tasks for missing some routine practice on account of some genuine excuse or reason and has allowed concession for this omission who are we to impose any

compulsion in this behalf. So, if a routine is missed owing to a genuine excuse, there is no cause to regret.

For the sake of whom were you fasting?

While quoting a statement of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه, Dr. Abdu Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه once said: A man fell sick during the month of Ramazan and had to give up fasting because of his sickness. This omission made him very sad. The Sheikh said that there was no occasion for sorrow and regret, as the man was not fasting for his own pleasure but was fasting for the pleasure of Allah. Allah has Himself given leave that fasting may be given up during sickness and compensated later on according to the rules of the *Shari'ah*.

It is possible to miss the Ramazan fasting or some other routine acts on account of genuine excuses recognized in the *Shari'ah*, e.g. sickness, journey, menses in women, or any other handicap arising from an injunction of the *Shari'ah*, e.g. attendance on parents during their sickness. There is no cause of regret in such situations. It is, however, not good to miss routine practices of *Deen* on account of carelessness and laziness.

The Remedy for Laziness

The only possible remedy for laziness is to resist it with courage. Leave no loop hole to overpower it. If we succeed in eradicating the disease of laziness and lethargy from our lives and become active and smart, we have done half the job. We have then to work hard to complete the other half.

May Almighty Allah assist us in facing and resisting laziness with courage. *Aameen.*

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 44

PROTECT YOUR GLANCES

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue	:	Jame' Masjid Baitul-Mukarram Darul-Uloom, Karachi
Date	:	25th Ramadhan After Zuhur Prayers

PROTECT YOUR GLANCES

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيات اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالىٰ عليه وعلىٰ اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

اما بعد

فاعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم، بسم الله الرحمٰن الرحيم

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤمِنِيْنَ يَغُضُّوْا مِنْ اَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوْا فُرُوْجَهُمْ ذٰلِكَ اَزْكٰى لَهُمْ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ. (سورة النور: ٣٠)

امنت بالله صدق الله مولانا العظيم وصدق رسوله النبى الكريم ونحن على ذالك من الشاهدين والشاكرين والحمدلله رب العالمين

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek his forgiveness and believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our souls and from the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom He guides and there is none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah the One who has no partner. I also bear witness that our sire, and our authority, our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah have mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی اللہ عنہم and bless them and salute them all in great abundance.

(O Prophet!) Tell the believers to lower their glances and protect their private parts. This is purer for them. Indeed, Allah is Aware of what they do! (24: 30)

Casting evil glances a deadly disease

In this verse Almighty Allah has mentioned a deadly disease. This is a disease fraught with many vices. Many have become addicted to this sin from among those who sit in the company of Ulama and godly men, also religious men regular in their prayers and fasting. Today the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that when you go out, you find it very difficult to protect your eyes from evil glances. Wherever you turn, you will find captivating scenes from which it is difficult to shield the eyes.

The Reality of "evil glances"

"Evil glances" mean casting glances at women who are not closely related to you, particularly when the glances are amorous and lustful or are intended for enjoyment. It is also a sin to cast such covetous glances even at the pictures and photos of those gazing at whom falls within the definition of "evil glances". The sin of casting evil glances is a great hindrance in reforming human soul. Of all the conceivable sins it is the most damaging to man's spiritual and inner soundness. The reform of the inner self of man is almost inconceivable, unless control on glancing is attained. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in a Hadith:

النظر سهم مسموم من سهام ابليس (مجمع الزوائد، ج۸ ص ٦٣)

The glance is one of the poisoned arrows of Iblis. If anyone is hit by this poisonous arrow and fails to ward it off, it becomes very difficult for him to ameliorate his inner self. Of all the factors of destruction, the evil glances of the eye is the most effective.

You shall have to take this bitter dose

I have heard my Sheikh Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه saying: An evil glance is a fatal poison. If anyone desires to reform his inner self he will have to protect his glances from being misdirected. This is, however, a very difficult task, as you cannot find refuge anywhere. Wherever you turn you find violation of *Purdah*, nudity, lewdness, etc. It is very difficult for anyone to protect his eyes from forbidden glances. However, you have to take this bitter dose, if you want to taste the sweetness of *Eeman* and establish nearness with Almighty Allah and win His love to purify your inner self. You can make no headway in this field without taking this bitter dose. The dose is bitter only

in the beginning. When you get used to it, its bitterness turns into sweetness which you cannot afford to miss.

The coffee of the Arabs

The Arabs are very fond of coffee which they take in small cups specially made for it. When I was a small boy, an Arab Sheikh visited Karachi. My respected father went to see him and I also accompanied my father. It was the first time that I saw coffee which was served in small coffee-cups to all the guests. I thought that it might be sweet and tasteful drink, but as soon as I sipped a little of it I found it very bitter. As I could not spit the draught out in that meeting, I had to gulp it down with difficulty when it went down the throat, I felt its activating effect. Later on I had an opportunity to take it in one or two other meetings. Gradually I got used to it and now I find it very tasteful.

You will find it sweet and tasteful

Just like coffee which tastes very bitter in the beginning, but becomes very tasteful when one has become used to its exhilarating effect. May Almighty Allah grant all its sweetness. *Aameen.*

In the same way casting evil glances is also a very formidable task in the beginning, but when one gathers courage to protect himself, the task becomes easy and enjoyable. The taste of protecting the eyes from this sin becomes more enjoyable than that of polluting them by casting evil glances on forbidden scenes.

The eyes are a great blessings

Our eyes are a natural optical machine which Almighty Allah has conferred upon us by His mercy, without any request from our side. This is a blessing which we have

received from Allah free of charge and without any labour and cost. That is why, we do not value this invaluable blessing. If you want to get an idea of this God-given blessing go and ask those who are born blind or have lost their eyes or eyesight through some disease or accident. If something adverse happens to the eyes, the unfortunate victim will like its restoration at any cost. This is indeed a very delicate machine the like of which none has invented so far.

Seven miles' journey in one moment

I had read in a book that the pupil of the eye expands in darkness and contracts in light. When a man goes into darkness or enters light the pupil expands or contracts respectively during this process of expansion and contraction the muscles of the eye travel at the speed of seven miles per moment, but man does not feel this tremendous speed. So these eyes are such a wonderful blessing of Allah.

Right use of the eyes

If you put this blessing of the eyes to its right use, Allah has promised to reward you. For example, if you cast on your parents loving glances, you will, according to a Hadith, get recompense equal to that for performing one *Hajj* and one *Umrah*. It occurs in another Hadith that when a husband enters his house and he and his wife both east on each other loving glances then Almighty Alalh casts on both of them His glance of mercy. When the eyes are put to the right use then not only does Allah grant joy and happiness, but He also grants them reward and compensation in the Hereafter. On the other hand, if they use their eyes in looking at forbidden scenes and objects then the torment for this is also very severe. In addition,

this evil act destroys the integrity of man internally.

Remedy for recovery from the disease of casting evil glances

There is only one way to get rid of the vice of casting evil glances. Be firm and courageous to resolve and you shall never cast your glances at forbidden scenes and objects. Having so resolved, stick to it with fortitude:

آرزوئیں خون ہوں، یا حسرتیں برباد ہوں
اب تو اس دل کو بناتا ہے ترے قابل مجھے

This Urdu couplet means: I have resolved firmly that I shall make my heart worthy of Allah, however, seriously this resolution may frustrate my wishes and aspirations

Save the eyes from the sin of casting evil glances with courage and firm resolution. If you do this you will receive Allah's assistance in your resolution. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has suggested some measures to save ourselves from the sin of casting evil glances. He رحمة الله عليه has said:

If a man comes across a woman and the "self" incites him to cast a glance at her, because you will not go beyond this glancing. It should be understood well that this is a deception of the "self". Safety lies if the "self" is not obeyed. (Aufas-e-Eesa, Pt-I, P-142)

To think that there is no harm in casting a glance is Satan's deception. The only remedy is to resist this temptation and deception and turn the glance away from forbidden scene.

Remedy for the cure of lustful thinking

Once Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه advised us to banish from our minds lustful thoughts in this way. When a very strong urge is born to cast an evil glance on some forbidden scene or object, imagine that your father is

watching you. Would you dare to commit this sin even then? Or would you commit this sin, if your Sheikh or your own children are watching you? Certainly you would not do that, despite your urge to commit the sin.

These persons whether watching or not watching you at that moment does not affect your life in this world or the life in the Hereafter. You should think that Allah, the King of all Kings, is certainly watching you Who has the power to punish you for this sin. By virtue of this trend of thinking there is every hope that Almighty Allah will protect you from this sin.

What will happen if the film depicting your life is shown?

I also remember a speech of Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه in which he asked us to imagine Allah making this proposal:

All right, I shall save you from Hell on one condition. I shall run a film depicting the details of your entire life, of your childhood, your youth, your old age till death which will be shown to people including your parents, your brothers, sisters, your own sons and daughters, your pupils, your teachers and your relatives, friends and acquaintances. If you approve this proposal I shall spare you from Hell.

In such an awkward and humiliating situation said the Sheikh, a man will probably tolerate the punishment of Hell instead of the disclosure of the secrets of his life before all his near and dear ones.

Now for a while consider that when you will not like to be exposed and disgraced before your relations and so many other people how will you tolerate the disgrace of being so exposed before Almighty Allah.

The Heart's insistence on, and an inclination to a sin, is not a sin

In another speech Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has said:

"Casting an evil glance is a matter of inclination which is an unintentional act and is not accountable. The next stage is to act upon the demand of this inclination and it is accountable. *(Anfas-e-Eesa)*.

The inclination of the heart means its great desire and a pressing urge to see some forbidden scene or object. It is not accountable, because it is unintentional and it is, therefore, not a sin. The next stage, as indicated above is that the demand of this unintentional inclination is acted upon by casting a glance at a forbidden scene. This is intentional and will be subject to accountability. There is another aspect of the issue. If a man's glances fall at a forbidden object unintentionally, but he intentionally lets his glance remain fixed on the object, this becomes a sin and is accountable. Thus, the first inclination, being unintentional is neither a sin nor accountable. However, the second stage being intentional is a sin and is also accountable.

It is forbidden to seek pleasure through imagination

"This imaginary act includes glancing at something intentionally and to think about it. It may be remedied by applying a check to the "self" and to lower down the eyes."

To seek pleasure, in imagination, from a forbidden woman is as unlawful as to cast a glance at a woman with sinful intention. To get rid of this evil it is suggested to control your "self" and keep looking downwards. Do not look all around rather keep your eyes low towards the ground.

While walking, let your glances point downwards

Hazrat Dr Sahib رحمة الله عليه said that when Almighty Allah expelled Satan from Paradise, then he prayed to Allah to grant him a respite till the Day of Judgment and Allah did grant him this respite. Having succeeded in receiving this resptie he proudly said, as reproted in the Holy Qur'an:

لَاٰتِيَنَّهُمْ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ وَعَنْ اَيْمَانِهِمْ وَعَنْ شَمَآئِلِهِمْ ط

(سورة الاعراف: ١٧)

> This means: I shall come upon them from before them and from behind them and from their right and left hands.. (7: 17)

As you see, in his prayer Satan mentioned only four directions i.e., the front, the back, the right and the left. This means that Satan launches his attack only from these four directions. He omitted the two directions "above" and "below" which are immune from Satan's attack. During walking we cannot look upwards for fear of stumbling against some hurdles in the way. We can however, point our glances donwards, as far as possible, to be safe from Satan's attacks with Allah's mercy. So while walking you should not look unnecessarily right and left and at the back, but you shuld look downwards. If you follow this advice you shall see how Allah's help and protection come to you. Almighty Allah has said in the Qur'an:

قُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يَغُضُّوْا مِنْ اَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوْا فُرُوْجَهُمْ (سورة النور: ٣٠)

> That is: (O Prophet !) Tell the believers to lower their gaze and guard their modesty. This is purer for them. (24:30)

Thus, in this divine command there is an injunction to lower your glances which will result in protecting the purity of your private parts.

This Distress is less severe than the Distress of Hell

Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has further stated:

One should pluck up courage to act upon these (two) injunctions, though they may prove very distressing. This Distress will, however, be less severe than the Distress of Hell.

The severity of the Distress of Hell cannot be imagined which is endless and eternal, but the trials and tribulations of this world, however severe, are shortlived.

Pluck up courage

If you follow this formula for a few days with courage, this inclination (to cast evil glances) will be diminished. This is the only remedy and the last remedy.

Almighty Allah has made a promise for those who take pains and strive hard in His way:

والذين جاهدوا فينا لنهدينهم سبلنا. سورة العنكبوت:٦٩

We surely guide on to Our path those who strive hard in Us. (29 : 69)

So in compliance with this divine command take pains in keeping your glances downwards and as a result Almighty Allah shall reduce the temptation to the sin of casting evil glances. This is the only available remedy for this disease. The people wrongly think that the Sheikh shall prescribe for them some formula of sacred words or blow over the patient after rehearsing something that will bring cure to them of this disease. You should all know that firm resolution accompanied with unyielding courage is the only solution to the problem.

Do Two things

Resolve to do two things. Firstly, pluck up courage to resist the temptation, to the best of your ability. Secondly, turn to Almighty Allah for assistance. Turning to Allah means that you should at once seek Allah's help and seek refuge with Him as soon as you are face to face with a situation in which Satan may involve you in this heinous sin. Thus, you should have full confidence that none except Allah can rescue you from the dangerous situation.

Adopt the character of Hazrat Yusuf علیہ السلام

We are all well aware of the story of Hazrat Yusuf علیہ السلام, as related in the Holy Qur'an. When he علیہ السلام was caught in the severe trial, he علیہ السلام too took resort to the formula of using his courage and resolution. When Zulaikha, the King's wife locked all the doors and invited Yusuf علیہ السلام to sin, he علیہ السلام saw that there was no way out. However, he علیہ السلام ran towards the doors which had been locked. He did whatever he was able to do and become entitled to pray to Allah to help him out of his difficulty and distress, as he himself could do no more. Allah then did His part of the job by breaking the locks and opening the doors. Maulana Rumi has expressed this incident beautifully in his Persian couplet:

گرچہ رخنہ نیست عالم را پدید
گیرہ یوسف وار می باید دوید

You are not getting a way out of the vices of the world, nor a refuge from them. You should try to the best of your ability to save yourself from them, just as Hazrat Yusuf علیہ السلام had done to save himself.

If one does these two things, viz., try his best to save himself from the grip of sins and seek Allah's help to save you by His mercy from the critical situation. If you follow

this formula, you are sure to succeed.

Take the course of Hazrat Yunus عليه السلام

Our Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه said about Hazrat Yunus عليه السلام, as we also know, that Almighty Allah imprisoned him عليه السلام in the belly of a fish for three days. Hazrat Yunus عليه السلام had no way to get out of this prison. Darkness was on all sides. He himself had become qutie helpless and could do nothing to save himself. In such a critical situation he besought Allah in the following words:

لا اله الا انت سبحانك انى كنت من الظلمين

There is no God, except You. Be You glorified.
I have indeed been a wrongdoer, (21;87).

Almighty Allah responded to this prayer in the following words whereby He accepted his عليه السلام prayer:

فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ(سورة الانبياء:٨٨)

Then we heard his prayer and saved him from the anguish. And thus do We save the believers. (21:88)

Thus, he came out of the belly of the fish after three days. That is how Almighty Allah comes to the rescue of His believing servants.

Dr. Hazrat Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه has invited us to consider the real meaning of these verses in which Allah has said: And thus do We save the believers. Does it mean that a believer will first have to get into the belly of a fish and will call Allah from there, and then Allah shall come to his rescue? This is not the meaning of the verse. It really means that just as Hazrat Yunus عليه السلام had been imprisoned in the darkness of the belly of the fish, you too may be imprisoned in the darkness of some other kind. There also your refuge is the same personality as that of

Hazrat Yunus عليه السلام, viz., call Allah in these words:

لا اله الا انت سبحنك انى كنت من الظالمين

That is, when you pray to Allah in these words, He shall rescue you from whatever darkness you may have fallen into.

Call Me

So, when you are surrounded by the darkness of the demands of your 'self', and of the environments, etc., then call Allah for help against these darknesses and for rescue from their evils. If you make such a supplication with sincerity and from the core of your heart, your supplication is sure to be accepted by All Compassionate Allah.

To pray to Allah for worldly gains and objectives

Sometimes a man prays to Allah for worldly gains and objectives, e.g., health, wealth, some post or high office. It is Allah's mercy that He accepts all reasonable prayers of His servants, although the mode of acceptance differs from prayer to prayer and man to man. Sometimes Allah grants exactly the same object which his servant desires, e.g. health, wealth or post, etc. Sometimes Almighty Allah Knows - and who can know better than He that the object of the prayer is not in the best interest of the man. For example, by getting wealth or a high office the man will become proud or tyrant like Pharaoh and will destroy his Hereafter. So the object desired in the prayer is not granted. Instead, Almighty Allah grants the man a substitute that is better for him in this world as well as in the Hereafter.

A Prayer for some gain of *Deen* (Faith) is sure to be granted

Sometimes a sincere man prays to Allah to guide

him on to the path of *Deen* and the *Sunnah*, protect him from sins, from going astray and from disobedience. As there can be no better substitute for such requests, Allah grants them by His mercy. So while asking Allah for some boon, the petitioner must feel sure that his petition shall find acceptance with Merciful Allah.

What to do if a sin is committed after prayer?

Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ pointed out that if you pray to Allah to save yourself from sin and yet you happen to commit a sin, does it mean that your prayer had not been accepted. If a prayer for some worldly gain is not accepted it was pointed out that Allah shall grant the applicant some better substitute. Is it possible to say the same thing in the case of a prayer for protection from sin? Can there be a better substitute than saving the suppliant from sins? Certainly not. Then what is the answer?

Allah grants an opportunity for repentance for sins

You must note it carefully that the prayer was granted by Allah, but if, in some rare case, the man again commits the sin, Allah grants him an early opportunity to turn to Allah in repentance and seek His pardon. Sometimes true and sincere repentance after the commission of a sin raises a servant's rank to a height hardly conceivable. A servant's remorse after committing a sin and offering hearty repentance are very valuable in the sight of Merciful Allah.

Then I shall raise you to a high station

Dr. Hazrat Abdul Hai Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ used to say that, if by chance you commit a sin after this prayer, do not mistrust Allah that He did not grant your prayer. You do

not know anything about Allah's intention about the height to which He wishes to raise you. When by chance you happen to commit a sin, Allah grants you an opportunity for repentance and shall make you a recipient of the benefits emanating from His attributes as the veiler of sins, being All-Merciful and All-Forgiving...so never think that your prayer has gone waste. Persist in doing these two things, i.e. pluck up courage and seek Allah's bounties with your prayers and wait for the miraculous results.

There is only one formula for safety from sins

I have mentioned a few points about the sin of casting evil glances. May Allah help us by His mercy to act upon these points of advice. *Aameen*! It is not imperative only for the sin of casting evil glances but for all other sins that these should be resisted with repeated and renewed courage and by turning to Allah with repentance and prayer. Only one of the expedient will not do; both are necessary. Using only one of the two expedients may be likened to a man desiring to go westward, but running Eastward. How is it possible? Take the right direction and then hope to reach your desired destination. Anticipate the acceptance of your prayer after it has been directed in the right manner and in the right direction.

So turn to the right direction, pluck up courage, then go ahead and beg of Allah your boon. This is the only formula for refraining from sins. This is also the formula for attaining all other virtues, devotion and righteousness. May Allah help us, by His mercy, to act upon these pieces of advice. *Aameen*.

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 45

ETIQUETTES OF TAKING MEALS

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue : Jame' Masjid Baitul-Mukarram
Gulshan-e-Iqbal,
Karachi

Date : 22nd July, 1993.

ETIQUETTES OF TAKING MEALS

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيأت اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالىٰ عليه وعلىٰ اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا

عن عمرو بن ابى سلمة رضى الله تعالى عنهما قال: كنت غلامافى حجر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم. وكانت يدى تطيش فى الصحفة، فقال لى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: يا غلام سم الله، وكل بيمينك وكل مما يليك (صحيح بخارى، كتاب الاطعمة، باب التسمية على الطعام، حديث نمبر ٥٣٧٦)

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek his forgiveness and

believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our souls and from the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom He guides and there is none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah the One who has no partner. I also bear witness that our sire, and our authority and our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah have mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی اللہ عنہم and bless them and salute them all in great deal.

Hazrat Amr bin Abi Salmah رضی اللہ عنہما has narrated: I was a boy in the Prophet's house. Once, while taking meals with him ﷺ, my hand was moving here and there in the plate. The Holy Prophet ﷺ then said to me: O boy! Pronounce Allah's name and eat with your right hand and from the side that is near you.Bukhari..... Hadith No: 5376)

There are Five branches of *Deen* (Faith)

I have repeatedly stated earlier that the injunctions that have been imposed on us can be divided into five branches, viz., basic beliefs, worshp, transactions and dealings, social life and the ethics. These five branches make up what is called *Deen*. If any of these five branches is omitted then *Deen* is incomplete. Therefore the demands of each of these branches should be fully met, i.e. our beliefs, worship, dealings with the people and business transactions, our social living and our ethical conduct and character should all be complete and up to the mark.

Deen is incomplete without reforming the social life

So far we have discussed and studied the subject of ethics. Imam Nuwa-wee رحمة الله عليه has framed a new chapter "*Mu'asharah*" (co-living with other men) and has cited Ahadith concerning this branch. This considers how we should eat, drink, live in the house or the neighbourhood with others. All these activities form part of "Mu'asharah" i.e. social life.

Hazrat Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanawi رحمة الله عليه used to say: Nowadays people have excluded "*Mu'asharah*" from definition of *Deen*. They do not accept that the injunction concerning *Deen* also apply to this important subject that is "*Mu'asharah*". This is the stand even of those people who are very punctual and sincere in other activities of *Deen*, e.g. prayers, fasting, *Tahajjud*, remembrance etc. As a result, their *Deen* is incomplete.

It is, therefore, necessary to know and act upon the injunctions and teachings which Allah and His Prophet ﷺ have issued on the subject of "*Mu'asharah*". May Allah help us all to act upon these injunctions and teachings.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us everything

Allamah Nuwa-wee رحمة الله عليه has commenced the first chapter on "*Mu'asharah*" with the etiquettes of drinking and eating. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has given us very important directions on drinking and eating as he ﷺ has given directions on other walks of life. Once a polytheist raised an objection to Islam and said to Hazrat Salman Farsi رضی الله عنه:

انی اری صاحبکم یعلمکم کل شئی حتی الخراء ة قال: اجل، امرنا

ان لا نستقبل القبلة ولا نستنجى بايماننا الخ(ابن ماجه كتاب الحجاره باب الا ستنجاء بالحجارة)

That is: Your Prophet ﷺ teaches you everything, even the way of easing yourself in the latrine.

The polytheist said this by way of finding fault with Islam that the Prophet ﷺ taught the Muslims such insignificant things of life like the use of the urinal and the latrine. Hazrat Salman رضی الله عنه replied to him saying: We consider your objection as insignificant. In fact it is a matter of pride for us. Our Prophet ﷺ has taught us everything of life, including the etiquettes of sitting in and using the toilet. He ﷺ has taught us just as the parents teach their children every big and small things of life, if children were not taught these aspects of life they would never know them to become polished and civilized members of the society. Being kinder to us than our parents, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us such nice etiquettes about drinking and eating that by following them our drinking and eating become an act of worship entitled to recompense.

Three etiquettes of taking meals

In the Hadith which has been quoted above, Hazrat Amr bin Salmah رضی الله عنهما has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said to him: At the time of eating pronounce the name of Allah i.e. بسم الله (*Bismillah*) and eat with your right hand and from that part of the plate which is nearer to you. Do not extend your hand to take the food from any other part of the plate. Thus in this Hadith three etiquettes have been mentioned.

The first etiquette is to pronounce بسم الله (*Bismillah*)

Hazrat 'Ayesha رضی الله عنها has narrated another Hadith in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: When anyone of you begins eating he should pronounce the name of Allah. If by chance anyone forgets to pronounce Allah's name then on remembering he should pronounce these words later:

بسم الله، اوله وآخره (ابو داؤد، کتاب الاطعمة، باب التسمية على الطعام، حديث نمبر ٣٧٦٧)

"I begin with the name of Allah in the beginning as well as in the end."

Do not provide for Satan's lodging and fooding

Hazrat Jabir رضی الله عنه has narrated a Hadith saying that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: When anyone pronounces Allah's name on entering his house and at the time of eating, Satan feels frustrated and informs his companions that they have in that house neither place to pass the night nor food to eat, because the owner has pronounced the name of Allah at the time of entering the house and at the time of eating the food. When Allah's name is not pronounced on entering the house, Satan tells his companions that they can pass the night in that house. When the man does not pronounce the name of Allah at the time of eating, Satan informs his companions that they can take their meal also in the house. (Abu Dawood.... Hadith No: 3765)

This shows that when Allah's name is not pronounced, as mentioned above, Satan gets an opportunity to interfere with the affairs of the house. He can now seduce and misguide you as he likes and incite you to commit sins with his whisperings. Satan's interference in the matter of food means that, there will be no blessing and spiritual light in it.

Du'a (supplication) to enter the house

In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has emphasized two points i.e. to pronounce Allah's name when one enters one's house. It is still better to recite this *Du'a* which the Holy Prophet ﷺ is reproted to have taught his *Ummah*:

اللهم انی اسئلك خير المولج وخير المخرج، بسم الله ولجنا وبسم الله خرجنا، وعلى الله ربنا تو كلنا (ابو داؤد، كتاب الاداب، باب مايقول اذا خرج من بيته، حديث نمبر ٥٩٦)

It was the routine practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he recited the *Du'a* at the time of entering his house which is translated as follows:

> "O Allah! I beg You to grant me the best entry and the best exit. With the name of Allah we have entered and with the name Allah we have gone out and we have put our trust on our Lord."

When a man enters his house he does not know what happened in his house during his absence and he may hear something undesirable on entry. So, it is necessary to seek Allah's help and blessing before entering one's house. Similarly, the help and blessings of Allah should be sought at the time of going out of the house. This is to ward off trouble and distress at both these times, by virtue of this *Du'a*.

In order to ensure that you do not omit to recite the *Du'a*, write it on a piece of paper and hang it on the door of the house. This *Du'a* is halpful and effective in keeping distress and mishaps away and it is a means to earn reward in the Hereafter. It is not possible for Satan to stay in a house where exit and entry is controlled by this *Du'a*. So, Satan departs murmuring that there is no place for him in this house.

The elder should be the first to begin the meal

Hazrat Huzaifah رضی الله عنه has narrated that when they took food with the Holy Prophet ﷺ they did not extend their hands towards the food until the Holy Prophet ﷺ had started eating.

The jurists have deduced from this Hadith the injunction that when elders and youngers both are eating together, the rule of etiquette demands that the youngers should wait for elders to start eating.

Satan wants to make the meal lawful for him

Hazrat Huzaifah رضی الله عنه has narrated that once they were sitting with the Holy Prophet ﷺ for a meal but had not yet started eating. In the meantime a little girl came running. It seemed that she was awfully hungry. When she extended her hand towards the food, the Holy Prophet ﷺ caught hold of her hand and stopped her from eating the food. Shortly after, a villager also came and rushed towards the food. The Holy Prophet ﷺ caught hold of his hand also and stopped him from eating the food. Then addressing all the companions رضی الله عنهم present there the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

ان الشيطان يستحل الطعام ان لا يذكر اسم الله تعالى عليه وانه جاء بهذه الجارية ليستحل بها، فاخذت بيدها، فجاء هذا الا عرابى ليستحل به، فاخذت بيده، والذى نفسى بيده، ان يده فى يدى مع يدها (صحيح مسلم كتاب الاشربة باب آداب الطعام والشراب واحكامهما. حديث نمبر ٢٠١٧)

That is: Satan desired to make this food lawful for him by ensuring that Allah's name was not pronounced upon it. He wanted to do this by means of this girl, but I caught hold of the girl's hand. Thereafter, Satan watned to make the food

lawful for him through this villager, but I caught hold of his hand also. By God, Satan's hand is in my hand along with the hand of this girl.

Look after the children

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has indicated in this Hadith that if a minor begins to eat food in the presence of elders without pronouncing Allah's name, it is the duty of the elders to warn the child against this and should, if necessary, catch hold of his hand to stop him from eating, and ask him to pronounce (*Bismillah*) before eating.

Today we sit on the dining-table or the dining-cloth along with our children, but we do not mind at all if they have no regard for the Islamic etiquettes of dining. In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has drawn our attention to this state of affairs and advised that the elders should be watching the behaviour of the minors and correcting them as and when necessary to preserve the blessing of the foods being eaten.

Satan vomited the food

Hazrat Umayyah bin Mahshi رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that once the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting, a man started eating food before him ﷺ without pronouncing the name of Allah and finished the meal, except that only one morsel was left. While taking this last morsel to his mouth the man remembered that he had not pronounced before starting eating his meal. When he remembered the injunction of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for this occasion he pronounced the words بسم الله اوله واخره (with the name of Allah in the beginning and at the end of it). On seeing this the Holy Prophet ﷺ smiled and said: Satan was also sharing the food with the man. When he pronounced the words

Satan vomited whatever he had eaten. Satan thus lost his share of the food by virtue of this short phrase. The Holy Prophet ﷺ smiled on seeing this scene. By this incident He ﷺ indicated that if a man forgets to pronounce Allah's name in the beginning, on remembering this omission he should pronounce the words بسم الله اوله و اخره (with the name of Allah in the beginning and at the end of it). This action will protect the blessing of the food from being lost.(Abu Dawood...... Hadith No: 3768)

The meal is Allah's bounty

It appears from these Ahadith that the sacred words بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم (in the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Beneficent) should be pronounced before beginning the meal. It looks to be a very simple act but it is in reality a magnificent form of worship. On the one hand it becomes a form of worship deserving reward. On the other hand if a man pronounces the words with due attention, the wide door to the knowledge of Almighty Allah will be opened for him. It is because the scared words of the Qur'anic verse بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم invites man to realize the truth that the food made available to him is not the product of his own labour, but it is a gift of Giver that is Almighty Allah.

How did the food reach you?

Your pronouncing the words "بسم الله" invites your attention to the fact that countless sources of power and efforts of the universe have been harnessed to the process of making this one morsel of food which you have swallowed down your throat so easily and comfortably in a moment. Just think a bit how this piece of bread has reached you. A farmer put in long and arduous hours of labour in ploughing the field and rendering it worthy of cultivation. Then he

sowed it with seeds and watered it. Then the forces of nature viz., the wind, sun, the moon, the rains etc. worked on the field. Then sprouted from tiny seeds tiny and tender seedlings too feeble to bear a little touch. This seedling is raising its head by tearing the hard crust of the earth. Gradually and wonderfully it grows into a plant, then into a tree. The tree then blossoms, brings out small blades of grain which grows to maturity and ripens. Then so many men, animals are crushing and winnowing machines work to bring out of the chaff smooth and clean grains. That grain through the intervention of so many small and big businessmen reached the market of your city. A large number of wholesale and retail dealers work hard to make the bags of grain accessible to grinding mills and from there to the market. You purchase the flour and bring it for yourself and your family. After going through different stages the bread is cooked and is before you for eating.

Now consider a bit. Was it possible for you to assemble together all these various powers of nature to the making of a loaf of bread, to bring down the rain water from the sky or to attract the sun rays to ripen the grains? Moreover, was it within your power to pierce the seeds and bring out the sprouts? Almighty Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an:

اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَحْرُثُوْنَ ۝ ءَاَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُوْنَهٗٓ اَمْ نَحْنُ الزّٰرِعُوْنَ (سورہ واقعہ:٦٣)

"Have you seen the seed that you sow, Is it you that cause it grow or is it We Who make it grow? (56:63-64)

This is to say that you could not get even a small morsel of food in spite of all your resources put in the work. It is only Allah's infinite mercy that He is feeding you and all His creation with the choicest of foods. If you take your food with this admission of gratefulness

acknowledgement of divine benevolence, then your entire eating will become an item of worship deserving of recompense from Almighty Allah.

The difference between a believer's and non-believer's eating

Our Dr. Abdul Hai رحمة الله عليه used to tell us that *Deen* is the name of a change in the viewpoint. On effecting a little change in the viewpoint the world becomes *Deen*. Take the example of your food. If you take it without prouncing the words بسم الله and without admitting that it is a blessing granted by Allah, then in so far as eating is concerned, there is no difference between you and an infidel. You and an infidel both take food. This food will appease your hunger and afford you some taste, but it is purely a worldly affair, having nothing to do with your *Deen*. You are satisfying your hunger by taking food. The animals like cows, buffaloes, goats, etc. are also taking their foods. So there is no difference between you and these animals.

It is no credit to eat too much

During the time of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Qasim Sahib Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه the Hindus of the Arya Samaj (a new Hindu sect) had raised a great hue and cry against Islam. To highlight the truth of Islam Hazrat Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه used to debate on religious topics with the leaders of the Arya Samaj. One day he went out for a debating programme against a Hindu Pandit. The debate was to begin after taking the meal. Hazrat Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه got up after taking only a few morsels but the Hindu Pandit ate his fill. After the meal was over the host complained to Hazrat Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه that he had eaten very little. Maulana's reply was that he had eaten

according to his desire. The Arya Samaji Pandit was also sitting there. He tauntingly said: Maulana! In the eating competition you have been defeated. This is a bad omen for you. You may also lose the debate in the matter of arguments. Hazrat Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه replied, saying: If the intention was to hold an eating competition, a buffalo or a bullock would have been the right rival. I have come here to take part in a debate with arguments and not to take part in an eating competition.

The difference between an animal and a man

In his reply referred to above Hazrat Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه has pointed out that there is no difference between a man and an animal in the matter of drinking and eating. Both take food to keep themselves alive with Allah's sustenance. Sometimes Allah provides better sustenance to the animals. To distinguish yourself from animals you must pronounce the name of your Nourisher, Allah, before beginning to eat your food.

Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام, invited Allah's creatures to a feast

It is written in books that when Almighty Allah conferred on Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام the Kingdom of the entire universe, the Prophet عليه السلام, requested Almighty Allah to allow him to feast His entire creation for a full one year as an expression of gratitude to Allah. Allah told him that the project was n within his capacity. He repeated his request for one month's feast. Allah again told him that this too was not within his capacity. Then Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام repeated his request for one day's feast. Allah told him that this too was not within his power, As he عليه السلام was insisting on his request, Allah granted his request for one day. On receipt of

this permission Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام began to make preparations for this tremendous project of feasting with the help of the services of men and jinn. This took many months. At long last a huge dining - cloth was spread on the sea-shore and the food was placed on it. He عليه السلام commanded the wind to continue blowing over the food so that it might not get bad. Thereafter, Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام requested Almighty Allah to send some of His creation. Allah told him that He would first send a fish to partake of his feast. So, a fish came out of the sea-water and asked the Prophet عليه السلام about the feast. Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام welcomed and invited it to the feast. The fish started eating from one side and ate up the entire food to the other side and asked the Prophet Sulaiman عليه السلام for more. Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام complained that it had exhausted the entire food. The fish replied: Is a guest answered in this way? I have been eating my fill ever since I was born. On account of your feast I have remained hungry. Almighty Allah, provides for me every day two times with double the quantity that you have provided. Today I could not eat my fill.

Hazrat Sulaiman عليه السلام realized his delusion, prostrated himself and begged pardon for this. (Nafhatul-Arab, P-110)

Thank Allah after taking meals

Almighty Allah is providing everyone of His creation with sustenance, in the bottom of the sea and its darkness or wherever one may be. He has said in the Qur'an:

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللهِ رِزْقُهَا (سورة هود:٦)

"And there is not an animal on the earth, but its sustenance depends on Allah." (11:6)

Allah has taken upon Himself to provide everyone

of His creatures with sustenance, and there is no difference between men and animals in the matter of sustenance. Let animals alone Allah is providing sustenance to his disbelieving enemies also who deny even Allah's existence. They are ridiculing and insulting Him and are making a fun of His *Deen*. So far as eating is concerned, there is no difference between a Muslim and a non-Muslim, except that the non-muslim eats only to appease his hunger and enjoys the taste of the dishes and he does not care to pronounce Allah's name before eating. As a Muslim, you are advised to pronouncing Allah's name before eating and thank him for the sustenance He has provided for you. By so doing your act of eating will become and an act of *Deen* and are act of worship.

Change the viewpoint at the time of doing every act

Dr. Hazrat Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to tell us that he practised this principle for years and years and explained by saying:

I am sitting on the dining - cloth. The food is there, I am hungry too. I refrain from eating for a moment and think that I would not eat the food. The very next moment I realize that the food before me is only Allah's bounty and not the result of any effort on my part. It was the practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that when food was placed before him ﷺ he ate it with Allah's thanksgiving. I too will eat the food placed before me in compliance with the Prophet's *Sunnah*. Thereafter, I begin eating with the name of Allah (بسم الله).

I entered the house and felt happy to see the playful, lovely baby. I felt an urge to take the baby in my lap and fondle him with love. Yet I kept back for a moment and thought that it was not good to take the baby only for the sake of my liking. The very next moment I remembered that the

Holy Prophet ﷺ loved children very much and took them in his lap. Now following his ﷺ *Sunnah* I will also pick the baby in my lap. With this notion I picked the child in my lap. After relating to us this practice he recited this couplet:

جگر پانی کیا ہے مدتوں غم کی کشا کشی میں
کوئی آسان ہے کیا خوگر آزار ہو جانا

This means: It is not an easy job to make oneself used to grief and distress (in love). This is achieved by putting up with the tensions of grief and pain for a long period.

He went of saying: I have attained this by the grace of Allah, by constant practice and I hardly miss the opportunity. Whenever, some blessing of this kind comes before me, I feel at once that it is from Allah and thank Him and after pronouncing بسم الله I do the job. I have now become used to it. This is what I call " a change in vision" As a result of this change, a worldly act becomes an act of *Deen* and an act of worship.

The Food - A Blessing of Allah

Once I had an opportunity to atttend a feast with Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه. When the food was brought we began eating it. Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه began to point out the various blessings present in that food. Firstly, the food is in itself an absolute blessing. If a man is dying of hunger he will jump at anything worth eating to save his life, even if it may be of the worst quality. He shall eat it as one of the greatest blessings of Allah. As man appeases his hunger with it, the food is in itself an independent blessing.

A tasteful food - The second blessing

The second blessing is that the food is very tasteful and agreeable to one's palate and desire. A hungry man will even eat a tasteless food to satisfy his hunger, but here he finds the food tasteful and appetising. Thus, a tasteful food is another blessing of Allah.

Availabiity of food with honour - the third blessing

The third blessing about food is that the host is serving the food to the guests or the invitees with honour. If tasteful food was provided but it was not served to the guests with honour or was served as is served to beggars and menial servants, the taste and quality of the food would be meaningless and disgusting, as someone has said:

اے طائر لاہوتی اس رزق سے موت اچھی
جس رزق سے آتی ہو پرواز میں کوتاہی

"O celestial bird (i.e. man), death is better than the sustenance which retards the freedom of flying."

Thus, if anyone is providing you with food in a manner which is insulting and degrading, then there is no blessing and taste in that food. Praise be to Allah that the provider is providing food with honour and grace.

To have appetite for food - the fourth blessing

The fourth blessing consists in the presence of appetite and desire for food. The food is available, it is tasteful and has been served with honour. If there is no appetite due to indigestion, even the food of the best quality and standard is useless. Praise be to Allah that we are getting our sustenance which is tasteful, served with honour and there is also a good appetite.

Peace and security at the time of eating - the fifth blessing

It is the fifth blessing in respect of food that we are eating it with peace and ease without anxiety and fear. Good and tasteful food is available with grace and honour, but there is some worry torturing the mind like some mishap or bad tidings. In such a situation even the best kind of food becomes repelling and disgustful. Praise be to Allah that we are getting our food in a peaceful and congenial atmosphere.

To take food in the company of friends - the sixth blessing

It is the sixth blessing that we are taking our food in the company of our best friends. To take food all alone despite all the foregoing blessings is very much different from taking the same food in the company of our friends. Taking food in the company of friends and relations has a distinctive pleasure which is not available in eating it alone or in the company of strangers. Food is indeed a great blessing and this blessing is accompanied with so many other blessings. You must then be grateful to Almighty Allah for all these blessings.

This food is a combination of various forms of worships

When you take food with the belief that Almighty Allah has granted you so many blessings, you must render thanks to Allah. Taking food after pronouncing بسم الله (*Bismillah*) is indeed a worship. However, remembering all the blessings available in the act of eating and expressing thanks to Allah for all the blessings concealed in this one blessing becomes composite worship. Now this food which is a worldly gift, becomes a gift of the Hereafter by

becoming a form of worship. On the one hand you are enjoying taste, satisfaction of hunger and health for your body and on the other hand you are adding to your good deeds. This is what is called "Change of viewpoint". This "change of viewpoint" has the effect of changing your world into *Deen*. Hazrat Sheikh Sadi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has said in Persian couplet:

ابر و باد و مہ و خورشید و فلک در کار اند
تا تو نانے بکف آری و بغفلت نخوری

(گلستان سعدی)

The clouds, the winds, the moon, the sun and the sky are all doing their respective jobs, so that you may earn your bread. You should therefore, not eat this bread carelessly (and without rendering thanks to Allah).

You have already been advised that you should always begin eating with the name of Allah بسم اللہ If you by chance ever forget then pronounce these words

بسم اللہ اولہ و آخرہ

when you remember during course of eating.

How to compensate for an optional act?

Relying on this Hadith regarding the omission of saying بسم اللہ, Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has said that if a person forgets to do some optional worship at its appointed time, he should not think that the time having passed, it is no longer necessary to compensate for it. He should do that optional worhsip later on as and when he gets time for that. Once we were going in the company of Hazrat Dr. Sahib to attend some gathering which was scheduled to be held after the *Maghrib* prayer. We set off from our place late and had to offer the *Maghrib* prayer on the way. In order to save time Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ

offered only the three *Rak'ats* of the *Farz* (obligatory) prayer and the two *Rak'ats* of the *Sunnah*, omitting the two *Nafl Rak'ats*. We also did the same and rushed to reach the destination. On arriving there we joined the assembly, listened to the lectures and set off on the return journey after offering the *'Isha* prayer there at about ten p.m. At the time of returning the Sheikh asked us about the six *Rak'ats* of the *Aw-waabeen* prayers (*Nafl* prayer after Maghrib). We told him that these were missed for want of time. He said that, by the grace of Allah, he offered all his usual *nafl* (optional) prayers along with his *'Isha* prayer. He added that in this way he compensated for the missed six *Rak'ats* of the *Aw-waabeen* prayers.

Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه further said: You are maulawis. You will rule that no compensation is required for missed *Nafl* prayers, because this is necessary only in the case of *Farz* and *wajib* (obligatory and compulsory) prayers and not *Sunnah* and *Nafl* prayers. You will, therefore, take objections to my act of compensating for the missed six *Rak'ats* of the *Aw-wabeen*.

He رحمة الله عليه continued: Did you not read the Hadith in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that if you forget to pronounce Allah's name (بسم الله) when beginning to take your food, you should pronounce the words "بسم الله اوله و اخره" when you remember the first omission during your eating or at the end of it. On the analogy of this Hadith Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه has advised that if anyone misses some *Nafl* worship, it should not be abandoned altogether. In order to add to the record of our good deeds for the benefit of the Hereafter, we should compensate for these omissions as far as possible, no matter you call it Qaza or something else.

These are some of the fine points which one needs to learn from the learned Sheikhs. It is true that according to

the books of *Fiqh* (jurisproudence) there is no *Qaza* (compensation) for missed *Nafl* prayers. However, as advised by Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه, there is no restriction in compensating for these missed prayers. This will add to the balance of our good deeds. May Almighty Allah enhance the status of our Sheikh رحمة الله عليه. *Aameen.*

Du'a at the time of folding up the dining-cloth

عن ابی امامة رضی الله عنه ان النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم کان اذا رفع مائدته قال: الحمد لله کثیرا طیبا مبارکا فیه، غیر مکفی ولا مودع ولا مستغنی عنه ربنا (صحیح بخاری، کتاب الاطعمة باب مایقول اذا فرغ من طعامه، حدیث نمبر ٥٤٥٨)

Hazrat Abu Amamah رضی الله عنه has narrated that when the dining-cloth was folded up at the end of the meal, the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to recite this *Du'a* which means: O our Lord! Abundant praise is for You for this clean and blessed food (which You provided) which is neither insufficient nor unwanted nor dispensable.

This is a unique *Du'a* which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught, keeping in view the human nature and temparament. When man is hungry, he feels a great longing for food to appease his hunger. As soon as his hunger is appeased he becomes disgusted to see the same food of which he was so keenly desirous a few minutes earlier. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ taught this wonderful *Du'a*, lest having satisfied his hunger man should become indifferent to Allah's blessings and grow ungrateful to Him particularly when he will require these blessings again and again, throughout his life. This *Du'a* also implies an appeal to Almighty Allah to grant his sustenance again and again.

Get your sins pardoned after reciting this Du'a at the end of your meal

عن معاذ بن انس رضی اللہ عنہ قال: قال رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم:
من اکل طعاما فقال! الحمد للہ الذی اطعمنی ھذا ورزقنیہ من غیر حول
منی ولا قوۃ غفرلہ ما تقدم من ذنبہ (ترمذی، کتاب الدعوات باب مایقول اذا فرغ من الطعام،
حدیث نمبر ۳٤٥٤)

It is narrated by Hazrat Ma'az رضی اللہ عنہ who has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: The past sins of him are pardoned who says after taking his food: All praise is for Allah Who provided for me food to eat and granted me this food without any effort and labour on my part. (Tirmizi..... Hadith No: 3454)

Just think what a generous grant of reward and recompense for such a small and easy act! How merciful and Benevolent is Almighty Allah!

A small deed yielding a great reward

Please note that I have already mentioned this point that when it is mentioned in a Hadith that by doing a certain act sins are forgiven, the sins imply only minor sins. As regards major sins, they are not forgiven without repentance. Likewise sins involving usurpation of the rights or dues of the servants of Allah cannot be forgiven, unless the claimants write off their claims in favour of the liable persons. If a person recites this *Du'a* after food, Almighty Allah shall forgive all these minor sins. So small an act and so great its reward! Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ frequently said about this *Du'a* that in the form of this *Du'a* the Holy Prophet ﷺ has given us an elexir of life. A man becomes entitled to blessings and the virtue of gratitude, whether he recites this *Du'a* loudly, in low voice or

in his heart. May Almighty Allah help us all to observe these etiquettes. *Aameen*!

Do not find fault with food

عن ابی هریدة رضی الله عنه قال: ماعاب رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلم طعاماقط، ان اشتهاه اکله، وان کرهه ترکه (صحیح بخاری، کتاب الاطعمة باب ماعاب النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم طعاما حدیث نمبر ٥٤٠٩)

Hazrat Abu Hurairah رضی الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ never found fault with any food. If he liked,he ate the food, but if he did not like, he left it.

We learn from this Hadith that all sorts of food are a gift from Allah and it is our bounden duty to respect and value the sustenance granted by Allah which is a great favour to us from Him.

None is bad or worthless in the Universe

There is nothing in this world which Almighty Allah has not created with some wisdom and expedience. Everything found in the world has some benefit and utility. The famous Urdu Poet, Dr. M. Iqbal has very aptly said:

نہیں ہے چیز نکمّی کوئی زمانے میں
کوئی برا نہیں قدرت کے کارخانے میں

This means: There is nothing worthless in this world and there is nothing bad in the workshop of Nature.

Allah has, in His infinite wisdom created things which have some definite use, although we may not know the purpose of the creation of those things. We count snakes, scorpions, etc., among deadly reptiles, yet they too possess some advantage and use in the overall scheme of

Universe, no matter we know it or are in dark about it.

The story of a King and a Fly

It is related about a King that one day he was sitting in his court with all pomp and show when a fly sat on his nose. You might have seen that some flies are very obstinate. They sit on your body again and again, however, forcibly you may try to drive them away. The fly that sat on the King's nose also belonged to that category. On seeing this the King raised objection to Allah's creation of flies which, in the King's opinion, were a troublesome creature. A saintly person present in the King's court heard this objection and could not help replying to the King in these words: One wisdom in the creation of this fly is that it is defying an arrogant despot like you, Allah has demonstrated that you are too helpless to save yourself from the distress you are suffering on account of this fly. You cannot underrate the expedience and widom of the creation of this small fly.

A strange incident about a Scorpion

Imam Razi رحمة الله عليه has been a famous saint and an expert theologian who compiled the renowned commentary of the Holy Qur'an under the name *Tafsir Kabir*. It is such a detailed commentary book that the commentary on the Surah Fatiha alone covers two hundred pages. Writing the commentary on the first Surah of al-Fatihah he has related an incident on the direct narration of another saint who lived in Baghdad. The saint said that while taking a walk along the side of the River Tigris, he saw that a scorpion was also going along the riverside in front of him. The saint thought that being a creation of Allah, it was also created for some purpose.

We decided to follow the scorpion to find out its destination. After covering a long distance, the scorpion turned towards the river and stopped at the riverside. The saint also stood there. A little later the saint saw that a tortoise was swimming towards the scorpion when it reached the shore the scorpion jumped on the back of the tortoise. In this way Almighty Allah provided a boat for the scorpion to cross the river. As he had resolved to know the final result he also hired a boat and set off in the direction of the tortoise and the scorpion. When the tortoise reached the other side of the river the saint again started chasing it. After some time he saw that a man was sleeping under a tree. He thought that the scorpion was going to sting that man. The saint went near the sleeping man to wake him up and inform him of the scorpion's sting, but he saw that a poisonous snake was there spreading its hood over the man and ready to bite him. The scorpion quickly got on the snake and stung it so hard that the snake writhed and died instantly. The scorpion moved away in another direction. All of a sudden the sleeping man awoke from sleep and saw that a scorpion was creeping away nearby. He ran to kill the scorpion with a stone. The saint at once caught hold of the man's hand and told him that the scorpion had saved his life . The scorpion was the man's well-wisher because Allah had deputed it to kill the snake and save the man's life. The saint has said that on that day he observed the wonderful Omnipotence and power of Almighty Alalh. This incident shows that there is some wisdom and purpose in everything which Allah has created in this universe.

The worms that are born in filth

I have also seen another incident, although I am not sure of its genuineness. If it is a genuine incident it is full of morals. While sitting in a latrine a man saw there very small white worms which are some times also born in man's intestines. While admitting that Allah has created everything for some purpose and with wisdom he felt no doubt about the secret and wisdom of creating those useless worms.

After some days that man suffered from some eye disease. He did all that was possible for him to recover from that disease but all in vain. At last he came across an eye physician who told the patient that only one treatment was available which sometimes proves effective. He told the patient that a paste prepared from the worms that are found in man's stomach had sometimes been found to be efficacious in such a disease. When I heard this story I became fully convinced that Almigty Allah has created everything for some purpose, even though we may not be able to grasp the use and wisdom of that creation

Likewise, there is a wisdom and some purpose in the cration of that food which we do not relish and refuse to eat. At any rate, all food items are forms of sustenance granted to man by Almighty Allah whcih we must value and respect. If you do not like any food do not speak ill of it, nor try to find fault with it. This is dishonouring Allah's benevolence and blessing which is no doubt very bad indeed.

Do not disparage food

This is also a very valuable advice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that we should value and respect Allahs' sustenance. This is an Islamic etiquette but it is being badly violated in our society. We are initating the non-Muslims in this matter as we are doing in other

matters. We have no respect for Allah's sustenance. We throw away the superfluous food in dustbins. Sometimes our hearts shudder to see this disrespect to food which is being shown by the Muslims. Particularly in hotels and marriage feasts large quantities of valuable food dumped in dustbins and garbage heaps. According to the teachings of our *Deen* we should value even a small piece of bread we find lying anywhere, we should pick it up and place it at a raised ground, so that an animal or bird may eat it.

Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه and the value of sustenance

I have heart Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه relating an anecdote of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه. Once Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه felt sick and during his sickness someone offered him milk to drink. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه drank that milk. A little of it remained which he placed under his bed and fell into sleep. When he awoke from sleep he inquired about the left over milk. He was told that it had been thrown away as it was hardly a drought. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه got very much displeased. He scolded the man for having thrown away Allah's sustenance. He رحمة الله عليه said that if he could not drink that milk someone else could have drunk it or it could have been offered to a cat or a parrot, so as to help with it some creature of Allah. After this he رحمة الله عليه mentioned a principle:

It is binding on man to value and respect the small quantities of those things from large quantities of which he receives benefit in his ordinary life.

For example, man eats a large quantity of food to appease his hunger. If a small quantity is left over, man is duty-bound to value and respect that left over quantity. It is not lawful to waste it. This too should be put to some use.

The Right way of shaking off the dining-cloth

Sayyid Asghar Husain Sahib رحمة الله عليه, known as "Mian Sahib" was a teacher in the Darul-Uloom Deoband. He was a unique saint. His life recalls to our memory the days of the Noble Companions رضی الله عنهم. My respected father told us that once he called upon him رحمة الله عليه. As it was meal time the saint invited my father to dine with him. Accordingly, my father sat with him on the dining-cloth. When they had finished eating my father began to fold up the dining-cloth so that he might shake it off to clean it. Mian Sahib asked my father: Do you know how to shake off and clean a dining-cloth? My father replied: Hazrat, it does not require any special knowledge or art nor any special training. I shall take it out and shake it off. Hazrat Mian Sahib رحمة الله عليه said: That is why I asked you this question. Now it appears that you do not know the job. This is also an art. My father requested Mian Sahib to teach him that art.

Mian Sahib then reopened the dining-cloth and separated the bones from the food scraps, etc. He sorted out the bones which had some pieces of flesh sticking to them, and the big and very small pieces of bread. Addressing my father he said: See, these are four different things and in my house each is kept in a different place. The meat bones with some flesh have a different place which is known to the cat. The bones without flesh have a different place known to the dogs of the area. As for these pieces of bread I place the bigger ones of them on this wall for birds, like kites and crows. As for the very fine pieces of the bread, these are placed near a hole of ants. He added saying: This is Allah's sustenance; no part of it should be laid waste. This, my respected father رحمة الله عليه was convinced that the act of shaking off and rolling up

the dining-cloth was also an art.

Our plight today

What do we do now? We shake off the dining-cloth on the dustbin or the dust-heap, without thinking that this is disparaging Alalh's sustenance. Do you not see these countless creatures for whom Almighty Allah has produced this sustenance. If you cannot eat a thing yourself, keep it for some other creature of Allah. In olden days children were taught to value and respect Allah's sustenance. If a piece of bread was lying somewhere they were taught to pick it up and keep it with due regard at some raised place. As the western civilisation is gaining ground in our society, our Islamic values sand etiquettes are disappearing gradually. It is an injunction of the Holy Prophet ﷺ: If you like a food, eat it; if you do not like it, leave it, but neither speak ill of it, nor find fault with it nor disparage it. It is imperative to revive this *Sunnah*. These things are not being mentioned by way of story-telling and for enjoyment. They are for action in all sincerity. We should value and respect the sustenance granted to us by Almighty Allah. We should also observe the etiquettes taught by the Holy Prophet ﷺ about it. These form part of our *Deen* and are its distinctive features. We must at the same time do our best to get rid of the vices which the western civilization has imposed on our soceity.

Vinegar is also a sort of 'Salan' (Curry)

عن جابر رضى الله عنه ان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم سئل اهله الادم،
فقالوا: ماعندنا الاخل، فدعا به، فجعل ياكل، ويقول: نعم الادم الخل،
نعم الادم الخل. (صحيح مسلم، كتاب الاشربة، باب فضيلة الخل، والتادم به، حديث نمبر ٢٠٥٢)

Hazrat Jabir رضى الله عنه has narrated that once the

Holy Prophet ﷺ asked the inmates of his house to fetch him some curry (*Salan*), (bread was available). They told him ﷺ that they had nothing except vinegar. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Bring it. Hazrat Jabir رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ ate bread with the vinegar, repeatedly saying: The venegar is a very good curry.

The condition of the Household of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

It is stated about the household of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he ﷺ used to provide for his sacred wives one year's provision. Despite this nothing was available there to serve as curry (*Salan*). After all they were the wives of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. They spent most of their resources in the path of Allah. According to a Hadith narrated by Hazrat 'Ayeshah رضی اللہ عنہا fire was not lighted in her house for cooking for periods of three months continuously. They lived only on two items, dates and water. (Sahih Bukhari.... Hadith No: 2567).

The Holy Prophet ﷺ valued and respected a blessing

It appears from this Hadith that the Holy Prophet ﷺ greatly valued and respected a blessing which he ﷺ was granted by Allah, and he rendered thanks for that. In the society in general vinegar is not used as a curry; it is used only as a pickle to change the taste of the food and to make it more palatable. See how not only did the Holy Prophet ﷺ eat his bread with it, but he also repeatedly praised it as a very nice and delicious curry.

We should praise the food

On the authority of this Hadith the Muhadditheen (scholars of Hadith) have said that if anyone uses vinegar with the intention that the Holy Prophet ﷺ ate and praised it, he will receive reward for this. Another point that can be deduced from this Hadith is that a man should say something in praise of the food which pleases him. Praising the food implies gratitude for Allah that he granted the food. It also implies an appreciation of the cook who cooked the food. It is very improper on the part of a person that he satisfies his hunger and enjoys the food but does not say a word of gratitude and praise. The cook deserves a few words of praise and encouragement for the pains he has taken in cooking food for you. He is a great miser who cannot utter a few words of praise for someone.

The cook should be praised

Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه once related this anecdote that occurred with him. He said that a gentleman used to call upon him from time to time. He and his wife both were among his disciples for spiritual training. One day they invited him to a feast at their house. He called on them and took his food there. The food was very delicious and had been nicely cooked. It was the habit of Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه that whenever he took food at any place, he praised that food and also praised the cook who cooked it. He did this by way of expressing gratitude for Allah and praise and encouragement for the person who cooked the food. When Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه had partaken of the food, that housewife came near Dr. Sahib from behind the curtain and bade "Salam" to him رحمة الله عليه. Dr. Sahib uttered a few words of praise for the food and for her who had cooked it so nicely. On

hearing these words of praise she began to weep and Dr. Sahib heard her sobbings. Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه was astonished at this and thought that perhaps she was offended at some of his words. On being asked the reason for her weeping, controlling herself with some difficulty she said that she had been living with her husband for about forty years, but during this long period of association she never heard from her husband a word of praise about her cooking. She said that on hearing from the Sheikh a word of praise about the food, she was moved to tears. As her husband was a disciple of the Sheikh, the latter reprimanded him on his miserliness in the matter of saying a few words of praise about his wife's cooking in order to please her. The moral we learn from this anecdote is that after taking food we should praise the food as well as the cook who cooked it. This ensures rendering thanks to Almighty Allah as well as pleasing the cook.

To praise a gift

When a gift is presented to anyone the reciver of the gift generally utters a few formal words like this: It was not at all necessary. Why did you take this trouble, etc. Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه followed a different way of receiving a gift when it was presented to him by some of his close friends with due respect and love. He would show much fondness for that gift and his appreciation as if it was something which he badly needed.

Once I presented to him a piece of cloth. while accepting the humble gift, he said:

I was in search of such cloth. The colour of the cloth is particularly appealing to me.

About gifts he advised that the affection of the giver

of the gift should be acknowledged with a few words of appreciation and praise. There is a Hadith " تهادوا تحابوا " meaning, increase love among yourselves by exchange of gifts. This increase of love will materialize only when you receive the gifts with a few words of happiness and appreciation.

Express gratitude to the people also

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in a Hadith:

من لم يشكر الناس لم يشكر الله (ترمذی، کتاب البر والصلة، باب ماجاء فی الشکر لمن احسن الیك، حدیث نمبر ١٩٥٤)

This means: One who does not thank man does not also thank Allah.

That is to say, you must render at least verbal thanks to a man and praise him who behaves with you with love and sincerity and provides you with some benefit. This is an act of the *Sunnah*, based on the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. If we follow these directions we shall soon see the birth of love and betterment of mutual relations among families and individuals in the society, resulting in the end of enemities, hatred and malice, etc.

May Allah help us to follow the right course. *Aameen*!

The Holy Prophet ﷺ teaching his stepson good manners

Hazrat Amr bin Salmah رضی الله عنهما has narrated this Hadith which has already bee cited.

عن عمروبن ابی سلمة رضی الله عنهما قال: كنت غلامافی حجر رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلم، وكانت یدی تطیش فی الصحفة، قال لی رسول الله سلی الله علیه وسلم: یا غلام، سم الله وكل بیمینك، وكل ممایلیك

(صحیح بخاری، کتاب الاطعمة باب التسمیة علی الطعام، حدیث نمبر ٥٣٧٦)

Hazrat Amr bin Salmah رضی اللہ عنہما narrated this Hadith which has already been cited. The narrator Hazrat Amr رضی اللہ عنہ was a stepson of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat Abu Salmah رضی اللہ عنہ was Hazrat Umm Salmah's رضی اللہ عنہا first husband. After his death the Holy Prophet ﷺ married Hazrat Umma Salmah رضی اللہ عنہا After this second marriage the son also came to the house of the Holy Prophet ﷺ alongwith his mother, Hazrat Umma Salmah رضی اللہ عنہا. The son, Hazrat Amr رضی اللہ عنہ, thus came under the direct training of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He رضی اللہ عنہ has said: When I was a child and under training of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, I once sat with him ﷺ to take food. During eating my hand moved in the plate on all sides. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ observed this, he ﷺ said: O boy, pronounce Allah's name, بسم اللہ before beginning the meal and eat with your right hand from part of the plate which is before you.

It is a rule of etiquette to eat from one's front

In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned three rules of etiquettes. Firstly ,begin eating after pronouncing the words بسم اللہ . Secondly, eat with your right hand. Thirdly, eat from the part of the plate which is facing you and not from all sides. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has laid great emphasis on observing this etiquette for obvious reasons. While eating food facing you if some food is left, it will not look clumsy someone shall eat it without feeling any disgust, otherwise the food will have to be thrown away.

Blessings descend on the middle of the food

According to a Hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ blessings of Allah descend on the middle of a food when it is served. If the food is eaten from the middle of it, the blessings will disappear. These divine blessings prolong, if the food is eaten from the sides. A qeustion arises about the meaning and significance of these blessings. What are they? How do they descend on the middle of the plate only? The answer is that we cannot grasp these divine secrets with our limited knowledge and intellect. These are the wisdom and expedients of Allah best known to Him and His Prophet ﷺ. It is also not necessary for us to involve ourselves in this issue. We have been taught to eat food facing us and not from the middle of the plate. (Tirmizi..Hadith No: 1806)

If there are many items on the plate we can extend our hands to other sides also

The foregoing rule of etiquette is applicable only when there is only one item of food on the plate. If there are many items of food, it is permissible to extend one's hand from side to side to pick up the item of one's choice. Hazrat 'Akraish bin Zaeeb رضی اللہ عنہ who is a companion رضی اللہ عنہ has said: Once I called upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was going to attend some feast. He took me also with him ﷺ when we reached the place of the feast "Sareed" was placed on the dining-cloth. (Sareed is prepared with crushed pieces of dried bread soaked in curry. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was very fond of this dish and he ﷺ has spoken about its excellence). When I started eating I omitted pronouncing the words بسم اللہ. The Holy Prophet advised me to pronounce these sacred words before taking food. In addition to this, I picked up the morsels from different sides of the plate. Seeing me do this the Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

يا عكراش، كل من موضع واحد، فانه طعام واحد

"O ʿAkraish, take the food from one place because the food is of one kind.

So I began to eat from one side. Thereafter a very big plate was placed before us with different kinds of dates. According to the common saying that "once bitten twice shy", I began to eat the dates from one side, as the Holy Prophet ﷺ had advised me earlier. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ saw that I was picking up the dates from one side only he ﷺ said:

يا عكراش، كل من حيث مثئت، فانه غيرلون واحد

That is O ʿAkraish, eat from wherever you like because the dates are of different kinds.

Through this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught that when the food is of one kind it should be eaten from the front of the person eating it. If the food is of different kinds, there is no harm in eating it by extending the hand to different sides to take up the morsels. (Tirmizi, Book of foods..... Hadith No: 1849).

It is not lawful to take food with the left hand

وعن سلمة بن الاكوع رضى الله عنه ان رجلا اكل عند رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بشماله فقال كل بيمينك قال لا استطيع قال لا استطعت ما منعه الا الكبر فما رفعها الى فيه (صحيح مسلم، كتاب الاشربة، باب آداب الطعام والشراب، حديث نمبر ۲۰۲۱)

Hazrat Salmah bin Akwaʿ رضی الله عنه has narrated that once a man sitting with the Holy Prophet ﷺ was eating with his left hand. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him to eat with the right hand. He replied, saying: I am unable to eat with the right hand. (Apparently he was a hypocrite who was telling a lie). It is a very serious sin and crime to tell a lie to a

Prophet of Allah and to insist on one's mistake and sin. Allah does not like this audacity. The Holy Prophet ﷺ cursed him saying: لا استطعت (May you never have the ability to eat with your right hand). The curse of the Holy Prophet ﷺ had its effect. It occurs in a narrative that thereafter the man was not able to raise his right hand to his mouth. May Almighty Allah save us from such a trial. *Aameen*!

If one commits a mistake, one should admit it and seek pardon for it

If a man commits a mistake on account of his weakness as a man, but admits his mistake and expresses regret and remorse for it and asks for forgiveness then merciful Allah forgives him. It is a heinous sin to deny the mistake committed and to insist on it, particularly before the Prophet ﷺ of Allah.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ hardly cursed anyone. He ﷺ did not curse even his enemies. In respect of his arch-enemies he ﷺ prayed:

اللهم اهد قومى فانهم لا يعلمون

O Allah! Guide my community, because they do not know me.

As regards this hypocrite, the Holy Prophet ﷺ was informed through a revelation that he was refusing to eat with the right hand because of his hypocrisy and enmity, and that there was no disability with him. Due to this the Holy Prophet ﷺ cursed him which was at once accepted by Almighty Allah.

It is not right to insist upon one's mistake

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say: If a man calls upon saints and godly men in a state that he is addicted to bad habits and is a sinner, there is no harm. It is,

however, very serious and harmful to tell lies to these saintly men and to insist upon their sins. To tell lies to the Prophets of Allah is much more dangerous and heinous. Sometimes Allah discloses the secrets of such men to the successors of the Prophets عليهم السلام. To illustrate this Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه related an incident concerning Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه. Once Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه was delivering a sermon. In the gathering a man was sitting in an arrogant style, supporting his back against the wall and spreading out his legs. To sit in a gathering in such a style is against the etiquettes of assemblies. In order to correct the eprson, Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه took objection to the man and told him that it was against the etiquettes of an assembly to sit in that way and that he should sit with due regard and discipline. Instead of doing the needful, the man said that he was suffering from pain in his waist. Perhaps by this reply he wanted to say that it was wrong to warn him, as the Sheikh رحمة الله عليه was not aware of his pain. Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه told us that Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه bent down his neck for a while and closed his eyes. then raising up his neck he said to the man: you are lying. You have no pain in your waist, you should get up and leave the assembly. It appears that sometimes Allah informs His righteous servants of hidden things and conditions. It is, therefore, very dangerous to tell lies to, and deceive saintly men. Instead, if by chance a sin is committed the sinner should regret the sin and seek repentance. Allah will by His mercy, forgive that sin or mistake.

People contacted the man who had been turned out of the assembly and asked him to tell the fact. He admitted that he had no pain in his waist; he had told a lie to the Sheikh to justify his sitting. What the Sheikh said was true.

Refrain from being audacious to saintly men

Look! who is there in the world who does not commit a sin, a mistake or some shortcoming. Man, by dint of his very nature, does commit mistakes or sins. If anyone is not following the course appointed by these Sheikhs and saints, even then Allah sometimes helps him to repent for his sins and take the right course. However, to behave disrespectfully and rudely with the saints, to speak ill of them or to insist upon one's sins and to try to prove them right are such a grievous curse that sometimes it jeopardises the very '*Eeman*' of a person. Never mind, if you do not appreciate something in a saint, do not be insolent and disrespectful towards them, lest Almighty Allah should become displeased and may prove harmful to a man's *Eeman* (belief). May Almighty Allah protect us from this. *Aameen*!

Nowadays people have become addicted to disowning their faults. They have become so bold that they commit sins and try to prove that what they have committed is not a sin. For example, to allege that a certain saint is a worldly-wise man, he is neither a Sheikh nor a saint is something very dangerous. Refrain from this yourself and advise others to refrain from such misconduct.

Do not eat two dates together

عن جبلة بن سحيم رضى الله عنه قال اصابنا عام سنة مع ابن الزبير، فرزقنا تمرا، فكان عبدالله بن عمر رضى الله عنهما يمربنا ونحن ناكل، فيقول: لا تقارنوا، فان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم نهى عن القران، ثم يقول، الا ان يستادن الرجل اخاه (صحيح بخارى، كتاب الاطعمة باب القران فى التمر، حديث نمبر ٥٤٤٦)

Hazrat Jabalah bin Saheem رضى الله عنه has narrated that

during the caliphate of Hazrat Abdullah bin Zubair رضی اللہ عنہ famine occurred in the land. During this hard time Allah favoured them with a quantity of dates. When they were eating those dates, Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی اللہ عنہ passed by them and forbade them to eat two dates together. The act of eating two dates together is called قران in the Arabic language. All who were eating the dates were equally entitled to share the available dates. It was therefore not right that some should take only a single date and some others two dates together. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ forbade people to eat two dates together. Eating two dates together when others were eating only one is not just.

This Hadith teaches that it is not fair to usurp othes' rights.

How to use things of common use and joint ownership

In the above Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has also taught the principle that a man should not try to derive more benefit than others from something which is a common property meant for the benefit of all. By disobeying this principle one appropriates more than one's share, violating the rights of others. This is not lawful. Not only does this principle apply to dates, but it also applies to all common and public properties that are meant for the benefit of all on equal terms.

For example the system of self-service is in vogue nowadays in the marriage or other dinners. The invitees help themseles by taking their shares of the food themselves from the common pool. All invitees have equal right to the food. Now if a man takes in his plate more than his due share, depriving others of their shares - and this is what actually happens - he does something unlawful and commits the sin

involved in the Arabic word "Qiran" (قران).

Take out the food in your plate with due care

This principle has been stated to teach the *Ummah* that it is a Muslim's duty to make sacrifice for his other Muslim brothers and not to usurp their rights, irrespective of that the rights may be significant or insignificant in value. It is, therefore, necessary for every man to safeguard the rights of others instead of being selfish.

My respected father Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه once explained the same principle while sitting on the dining-cloth. He رحمة الله عليه said: when the food has been served on the dining-cloth, count the men sitting round the cloth and if the food is equally distributed among them how much of it will fall to your share. Then eat only your share. If you eat more it will fall within the definition of *Qiran* (قران) which is unlawful.

It is not lawful to occupy sitting space in a Railway compartment more than your due share

Once my respected father رحمة الله عليه explained to us a point concerning sitting arrangements in a Railway compartment. He pointed out that it is written for information in every compartment that there is sitting capacity for 22 passengers only. A passenger enters the compartment earlier and reserves for himself three or four men's seats and spreads thereon his bedding to lie down, compelling three or four men to remain standing. This too comes within the definition of قران . This is absolutely unlawful, because he had the right to take only one man's seat. By occupying more than one seat he has committed two sins. Firstly, he purchased only one ticket for himself

but occupied two or three seats without paying for them which he had no right. Secondly, by occupying unrightfully the seats of others he violated their rights. Thus, he committed two sins. By the first sin he violated a right of Almigty Allah and by the second sin, the rights of the servants of Allah.

The Rights of companions on a journey

It is a right of Allahs' servants and it is very difficult to have it pardoned. The rights and dues of men cannot be forgiven unless the claimants or the creditors forgive their rights or dues. If at anytime Almighty Allah creates in you an urge to repent for your sin, how can you search for the passenger who travelled with you whose right you had usurped? Now there is no way out for you to clear the liability lying on your shoulders. It is, therefore, very imperative for you to be cautious about these pitfalls. The Holy Qur'an has given comands on many occasions about this point:

وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ (سورة النساء: ٣٦)

Literally the words "صاحب بالجنب" mean "And the companion by your side." He is the person who has by chance taken his seat by your side, while travelling on a bus, railway train or an aeroplane. He too has some rights which you should not usurp. You should do some sacrifice for his sake. The journey is short and shall end very soon. If you commit some sin it shall remain on record in the roll of your deeds for the whole of your lifetime. It will be very difficult for you to have it pardoned.

It is compulsory to maintain proper accounts in a partnership business

It is a common practice prevailing nowadays that a few brothers are carrying on a partnership business, yet they maintain no accounts. They think that, being brothers, accounting is not necessary among them; it is necessary for outsiders. In the absence of this accounting none knows the share of each brother in the assets of the business, the profits and the capital invested. Everything is being done at randoms. Matters remain smooth in the beginning but, misgivings and suspicions agianst one another develop gradually later on. This mutual relations get bitter and end in litigation and closure of the business which causes loss to all.

All this happens, because we have remained away from the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is binding on every Muslim to keep proper accounts of common enterprizes and transactions. If no accounts are maintained the person responsible for this is himself committing a sin and is also involving others in such a sin. Remember that mutual reliance and confidence in business due to brotherly relationship continue for sometime and develop into mistrust and hatred later on. All this ultimately leads to endless litigation and quarrels. This is happening everywhere and everyday in the society.

Distinction among the properties of one another is a requirement of the *Shar'iah*

Distinction in ownership of properties is very necessary. It is necessary that there should be clear-cut definition of, and distinction between, properties of relatives like father and son and husband and wife, etc. Hazrat Ashraf Ali Thanawi Sahib رحمة الله عليه had two wives who had each a house of her own. He رحمة الله عليه said that his property and

those of his wives were quite distinct and different from each other. The properties in the house of the senior wife belonged to her and those in the house of the junior belonged to her. The properties and goods in the *Khanqah* (a Muslims monastery) belonged to Hazrat Thanawi رحمہ اللہ علیہ himself. He said that the ownership of these properties and goods were so defined and clear-cut that if he passed away he would have nothing to advise anyone about these.

Hazrat Mufti Sahib's clarification about ownership of property

My respected father Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمہ اللہ علیہ also followed the same principle of defining and segregating properties of one another. During the closing days of his life he had a bed placed in his room on which he lay day and night. We all attended on him in that room. When we brought to his room something from another room, my father insisted on returning that thing after it was no longer necessary. He felt offended and became displeased if it was delayed.

Sometimes I thought that it was hardly necessary to return the thing so hurriedly. One day my respected father رحمہ اللہ علیہ himself told us the reason. He said: I have mentioned in my will that whatever there is in my room is my property and whatever there is in the room of my wife is her property. When something belonging to other person comes to my room, I fear lest it should remain in the room and regarded as my property as mentioned in my will, when I have passed away. That is why I take special care that things belonging to others should be returned without loss of time.

All these topics are a part of *Deen*, although we have excluded them from *Deen*. These things need to be learnt from our saintly elders. All these points are deduced from

the basic principle taught by the Holy Prophet ﷺ that we should refrain from قران (i.e. joining together two things).

How to use common properties and goods?

My respected father used to tell us that there are things of common use in a house which are used by every inmate. These are kept at specific places. It is necessary to keep each such article in its specified place after using it. It is a major sin to misplace such things, because a person not finding it in its specific place will be subjected to inconvenience and distress. To cause distress to a Muslim is a major sin. It had never occurred to me earlier that it is a major sin. I thought that it was only a worldly affair and an administrative problem of the household. Note it carefully that there is not a single aspect of life which is not covered by an injunction of *Deen*. We should all think if we are following this principle of placing every article of common use in its proper place. This is a very trifling matter still on account of our inattention and indifference we are committing sins. Why is it so? It is because we attach no importance to matters concerning *Deen* and have no fear that one day we shall be called upon by Allah to render accounts. Another reason is that people are generally ignorant of these matters.

Anyway, all these topics fall within the definition of *Qiran* (قران). In short, everything by which the right of another person is violated or causes distress is a case of قران.

How to use a common Latrine?

There are certain acts for which man feels shy to talk about. For example, after using the latrine the excrement is not flushed out. This causes disgust to others. It is a major sin to cause distress and inconvenience to another

Muslim. We should all refrain from such acts.

The non-Muslims have adopted Islamic modes of living

Once I had the opportunity to accompany my respected father in a journey by air to Dacca (Bangladesh). During the flight I felt the need to go to toilet. You may have seen in the toilet a notice above the washbasin to this effect:

After having used the wash-basin kindly clean it with the cloth and dry it so that those coming later may not feel disgusted.

After I returned from the toilet my father رحمة الله عليه said to me: The notice written above the wash-basin means the same warning which I have been giving you off and on that it is a part of our *Deen* to save others from distress and inconvenience. The non-Muslims have adopted this principle and Almighty Allah has bestowed upon them success and progress in this world. We, on the other hand, have excluded these principles from *Deen* and have confined *Deen* only to prayers and fasting etc. We have totally ignored the rules and etiquettes of social living or "*Mu'asharah*". The result is that we are going back to deterioration and failure. Allah has planned the affairs of this world on the principle of cause and effect. Therefore, the results, good or bad, depend on man's deeds. This is a law of nature which according to Allah's Decree, applies to all, whether they are believers or non-believers.

An incident relating to an English Lady

Last year I had to go to London. From there I was going to Edinburgh by train. On the way I felt the need to use the toilet. When I reached the toilet I saw that an

English lady was standing there. I concluded that the toilet was engaged and the lady was waiting for her turn. I came back to my place. A long time passed neither anyone came out of the toilet nor the lady went in. I again went and saw the sign of 'vacant' on the toilet door. I asked the lady to use the toilet if she wants to. The lady told me that she was waiting for the train to move. It is the law of the country neither to flush nor use the toilet while the train is stationed. No sooner the train leaves the platform she will flush the toilet which she forgot earlier.

Now think that a lady was waiting only to flush the toilet which she could not do earlier. She is not flushing it presently because the law of the Railway stands in her way. At that time I remembered the advice of my father رحمة الله عليه that it is a part of *Deen* to take care of such small matters as flushing toilets and latrines, so that the omission may not be a cause of inconvenience and disgust to those who come to use the facility later. Our behaviour in such matters is just the opposite. We have formed the habit of looking to our own comfort and convenience, leaving others to mind their own business.

Why are non-Muslim Nations making progress

Bear it in mind that Almighty Allah has, in His wisdom, planned the affairs of this world on the principle of cause and effect. Following this divine principle, the non-Muslims began to work hard and reap the benefit of their labour according to the divine law of nature. They have no share in the blessings of the Hereafter because of their disbelief, yet by following the principles and etiquettes taught by the Prophet of Allah Muhammad ﷺ, they have made themselves entitled to the blessings of success and progress in this world. Being Muslims and believers we feel

jealous of them for their success and progress in this world, but we do not compare our ways of dealings with theirs. These non-Muslims do not tell lies in business, nor do they betray trusts, nor are they lovers of ease and comfort. They work hard with honesty and self-sacrifice and reap the fruits of their labour according to Allah's dispensation. The Muslims have given up these manly traits of conduct and have confined *Deen* only to the four walls of the mosques and *Madrasahs* (religious schools). We have excluded from *Deen* other walks of life. In this way we have suffered a double loss - remoteness from *Deen* as well as disgrace and humility in the worldly life. In spite of the fact that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us all the principles and formulas effective in attaining success in matters relating to this world as well as to the Hereafter. If we find ourselves backwards and disgraced, the fault is our own. This chain of discussion started from the rule of etiquette "not to eat two dates together", but how many important principles have emerged out of this simple rule of etiquette!

May Almighty Allah help us see things in their right perspectives - *Aameen.*

It is against Sunnah to take food, while supporting one's back against something

عن ابی جحیفة رضی الله عنه قال: قال رسول الله علیه وسلم : انی لاآکل متکئا

(صحیح بخاری، کتاب الاطعمة، باب الاکل متکئا، حدیث نمبر ۵۳۹۸)

Hazrat Abu Juhaifah رضی الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: I do not take food while supporting my back against something.

In another narrative Hazrat Anas رضی الله عنه has said:

رأیت رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلم جالسا مقعیا یأ کل تمرا

(صحیح مسلم، کتاب الاشربة، باب استحباب تواضع الاکل، حدیث نمبر ۲۰۴۴)

"I saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ eating dates, in squatting position.

It is an act of *Sunnah* to eat in squatting position

Some misunderstanding prevails among the people about the pose of sitting, while taking food. It is necessary to clarify the position. In the light of the Ahadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the best posture of sitting considered '*Mustahab*' (desirable) is the posture should ensure respect for the food as well as modesty. It should not be indicative of arrogance and pride. The common notion prevalent among the people that the Holy Prophet ﷺ used to eat in squatting position is not correct. I could not come across any narrative to prove such a notion. The posture described in the preceeding Hadith of Hazrat Anas رضی الله عنه means that, sitting on the ground, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had placed both his knees standing erect in the front. The Hadith does not suggest squatting position. It is however, quite correct that his posture of sitting, while taking food, indicated modesty and total absence of any vestiges of pride, arrogance or haughtiness. Instead, it indicated complete "servitude" (عبدیت).

The best posture for eating

A Companion رضی الله عنه has narrated that once he called upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and saw that he ﷺ was taking food like a slave. What the Ulama have concluded from the collection of Ahadith is that a man should eat while squatting on the knees. This posture ensures modesty as well as respect for the food and it checks gluttony. A man sitting at ease with the legs spread wide is likely to eat more. The saintly elders have stated that sitting with one leg erected and the other spread on the ground is also regarded

as a desirable posture ensuring modesty. In this posture there are benefits of this world as well as of the Hereafter.

It is also lawful to eat, while sitting cross-legged

While taking food, it is also lawful to sit cross-legged. It involves no sin but it is not as near to modesty as to other two postures mentioned above. It is much better to form a habit to eat, sitting in the above-mentioned two postures. However, if anyone feels some inconvenience he may eat sitting cross-legged. It is wrong to say, as some people allege, that it is unlawful to eat sitting in this posture. After all, the first two postures are preferable, as they allow for better respect for the food and more modesty.

To use tables and chairs for dining

To take food sitting round dining tables and on chairs is also lawful and it involves no sin. Taking food, sitting on the ground is nearer to the Prophet's *Sunnah* and ensures reward for following the *Sunnah* style. Sitting on the ground for taking food is much more preferable as already emphasized, but it must be noted that using dining tables and chairs is quite lawful and it involves no sin.

It is an act of *Sunnah* to eat, sitting on the ground

The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to take food, sitting on the ground for two reasons. Firstly, in those days the people led simple lives and the use of table and chairs was not in vogue. So, they used to sit on the ground. Secondly, to eat, sitting on the ground ensures greater modesty and deeper respect for the food eaten. You may experiment it for yourself that the state of the heart, while eating sitting round dining tables and on chairs and that eating, while sitting on the ground are widely different from each other. Taking food, while sitting on the

ground ensures more modesty, humbleness, meekness and submissiveness. This advantage is not available in taking food, while sititng round the dining tables and on chairs. If by chance a man has to take food, sitting round a dining tabel, this is quite lawful. It is, therefore, wrong to condemn this way of taking food as unlawful and sinful.

Provided this *Sunnah* is not ridiculed

I have mentioned just now that it is nearer to the *Sunnah* much better and entitled to more recompense to take food, sitting on the ground. This is, however, subject to the condition that action on this *Sunnah* is not made a laughing stock. If it is feared that sitting on the ground to take food may be laughed at, then one should not insist. Once while taking his class, my respected father one day told us a story saying:

One day I and some of my friends went to Delhi from Deoband. There we went to a hotel to take food. Two of us refused to eat on the dining table as it was against the *Sunnah*. They therefore, decided to take food in the hotel sitting on the ground. My father stopped them from this act and advised them to take food, sitting round the dining tables and on the chairs like the rest of the party. They seemed to be adamant in their decision. My father explained to them that this act of their would expose the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ to ridicule which was a very heinous sin. Moreover, this sin may sometimes take man to the boundary of *Kufr* (infidelity).

An incident full of morals

On this occasion my respected father told them another story. There was a very pious saint, known as Sulaiman ʿAmash. He was a teacher of Imam Abu Hanifah

رحمة الله عليه All the books of Ahadith are full of his narratives. The Arabic word اعمش (*A'mash*) means blear eyed. The eyes of a blear-eyed man become dazzled on account of light. A student came to him to study who was اعرج i.e. lame. He was a student who always remained attached to his *A'mash* teacher and accompanied him wherever he went. When both passed through the market the people ridiculed the two by remarking: "Look at the blear-eyed teacher and the lame student." The Imam *A'mash* رحمة الله عليه one day forbade his lame student to accompany him, because the people made fun of both of them. The student replied:

مالنا نوجرو يأ ثمون

We should not mind their jokes, because we receive reward and they earn sins.

Imam A'mash رحمة الله عليه replied saying:

نسلم ويسلمون خير من ان نوجرويأ ثمون

They and we both should become safe from sinning is much better than that we earn reward and they earn sins by our present practice. The best policy is that in future you should not accompany me to the market.

Do not mind being ridiculed at such times!

If people ridicule you for avoiding a sinful act, never mind their ridicule. You should remember that it is not lawful to commit a sin to avoid people's ridicule and derision. Similarly, it is not lawful to give up an obligatory or compulsory duty lest the people should make fun of you. However, if you have to choose between something which is only lawful and permissible and something which is superior and preferable, there is no harm in accepting what is only lawful and permissible and in rejecting what is superior and

preferable, if thereby you can save people from committing sins.

Do not use dining tables and chairs for eating unnecessarily

Once Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه was compelled by circumstances to take food sitting round a dining table and chairs. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه admitted that eating on table and chair was not unlawful, yet it had some similarity to the mode of eating adopted by the English infidels. In order to avoid this similarity Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه ate his food on the Table placing his legs on the chair. In this way he eliminated the possibility of similarity to the English style of eating.

Anyway, it is quite lawful to take food sitting round dining tables and chairs. There is no sin involved in it. It should, however, be noted that the nearer a man's actions are to the *Sunnah*, the greater will be the blessing in the actions and the reward for them. It is not good to make it a regular habit to eat sitting round dining tables and chairs unnecessarily. It is better to eat sitting on the ground as far as possible. The dining table and chair may be used for this purpose only in very compelling circumstances. One must take care not to support his back against something while eating. He should stoop the body forward. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has declared it a style of the arrogant to take food while supporting the back against something. This style must be avoided.

To take food, sitting on a cot

It is lawful to take food on a cot; it is better than eating, sitting round a table and on a chair. That style of eating is better in which the food and the man eating that

food are on the same level, than the style in which the food is at a higher level.

The best style is to eat food sitting on the ground. It ensures more modesty, greater reward and it is nearer to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

May Allah take us nearer to the *Sunnah* of His Prophet ﷺ - *Aameen*!

To indulge in conversation during meals

A wrong belief is prevalent among the people that it is not lawful to indulge in conversation, while taking food. This has no basis in the *Shari'ah*. It is quite lawful to talk during eating, if necessary. This is proved from the Ahadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has, however, suggested that the conversation during eating should be light and not on topics requiring serious thinking. The food also has a right that it should be taken with due attention and regard. Occasional light discourses of a recreative nature are quite lawful.

It is lawful to wipe the hands with something after eating

عن ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما قال: قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: اذا اكل احد كم طعاما فلايمسح اصابعه حتى يلعقها او يلعقها.

(صحيح بخارى، كتاب الاطعمة، باب لعق الاصابع ومصها، حديث نمبر ٥٤٥٦)

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas رضى الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: When anyone of you has taken food, he should not clean his fingers unless he has licked them himself or has got them licked by someone else.

The *Ulama* have said that two principles are deducible from this Hadith and it states two rules of etiquette. The first is that after taking food it is lawful to

wipe the hands with a piece of cloth or tissue paper in case water is not available or is available but cannot be used on account of some disease. It is, however, much better to wash the hands with water after licking the fingers.

It is an act of *Sunnah* to lick the fingers after eating

The second principle which is the main objective of narrating this Hadith is that the fingers should be licked before washing or wiping the hands. This was the sacred practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself that after eating he ﷺ used to lick his fingers, so as to take in the small particles of food sticking to them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has disclosed the wisdom of this practice in another Hadith, saying: You do not know which part of the food contains the blessing. It is possible that Almighty Allah may have endowed with blessing these last particles of the food sticking to the fingers which may not be found in the rest of the food. So do not waste this part of the food, thinking that its worthless.

What is this (blessing)

The world of today which is drowned deep in materialism is hankering after material things from morning till evening. It has lost the ability to peep into what lies beyond the stratum of this materialism. That is why the people do not understand what is "*Barkat*" or blessing. You should know that "*Barkat*" or blessing is such a comprehensive word which includes the prosperity and success of the world as well as of the Hereafter. This blessing is a gift of Allah which you may have seen in your life several times. Sometimes man collects countless resources to acquire someting, yet he fails to receive any benefit from them. For example, you may have collected in your house all the means of comforts and luxuries, most

modern and costly furniture along with numerous servants and attendants, yet you cannot sleep at night. This means that there is no blessing (*Barkat*) in these possessions and pomp and show. Are these resources in themselves an objective and an end ? They are only a means to some end and that is comfort and peace. They have failed to provide this comfort and peace, because these are a gift from Allah. You can have comfort and peace only when Allah bestows them upon you and not otherwise. So, we come to the whole truth that the only and exclusive source of peace, ease and comfort is Allah's grant and nothing else.

Material resoruces are not peace and comfort

Let everyone make a survey of the resources he possessed about forty years ago and those which he is possessing now. Surely the result of the survey shall disclose to you that a considerable increase has taken place in the resoruces during these years. They have now a better house with better furniture and amenities. Yes, but have they acquired more peace and comfort? If not, then it means that Almighty Allah has not granted the owner "*Barkat*" (blessing) through these costly properties and goods. It is said that such and such things contain blessings. This means that the benefit expected from these things is being received. Conversely, the things are devoid of "*Barkat*", if the benefit expected from them is not received.

Peace and comforts are gifts from Allah

Note carefully that comfort, peace and ease cannot be purchased from the market with money. They are exclusively Allah's gifts which He bestows upon whomsoever He wills. On account of the mercy and benevolence of Allah people having little money and

worldly resources enjoying more peace, comforts and ease than those who possess more worldly wealth and resources.

For example, there is a millionaire possessing all the worldly resources, factories, cars, fancy furniture, servants and attendants and all kinds of delicacies of food. He cannot, however, enjoy any of these, because he is suffering from indigestion. This is called absence of "*Barakat*" or divine blessing.

Now, look at the other side of the picture. There is a poor labourer who could earn only one hundred rupees after hard labour. He purchased coarse food from hotel and ate it. In this way he satisfied his genuine hunger. He found full enjoyment from his coarse and rough food. Then he lay down on his broken wooden cot and fell into deep and sweet sleep which he enjoyed for about eight peaceful hours. Thus, this poor labourer enjoyed the taste of the food he ate and the peace of deep sleep, except that he has no pomp and show around him. It is a convincing illustration of "*Barkat*" placed by Allah in little cheap articles, not traceable in precious articles of luxuries.

What is the meaning of "*Barkat*" in food?

Look! The food you are eating is not an end in itself. It is a means to generate energy in the body, appeasing hunger, affording pleasure for the palate, etc. All these advantages can be obtained from food only when Almighty Allah is pleased to grant them. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned in this Hadith that, may be, the last remnants of the food sticking to the fingers may have the divine "*Barkat*" and the main part of the food may be devoid of it. The main part of the food which you ate, being devoid of "*Barkat*", was not absorbed by the body and failed to generate the energy that was expected from it.

The influence of food on the inner self of man

Whatever has been discussed in the foregoing pages belongs to externally palpable effects of food. People whom Allah has granted inner insight can look into things much farther and deeper. They can easily find out by the light of their spiritual intuition which foods have salubrious effect on the emotions and thoughts of man and which darken the inner soul of man leading to the birth of dirty thoughts and urging him to commit sins. Some foods are so full of blessings (برکت) that they please and elate the inner personality of man and provide nourishment to the soul which induces him to do good deeds. We, however, do not perceive this fine difference between one food and another and thier enlightening or darkening effects. During these days of material race we have become blind to the real qualities and inner properties of things.

An incident illustrating the influence of food

Probably this incident relates to Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yaqoob Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه who was the Rector of Darul-uloom, Deoband (U.P. India) and a teacher of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه. Once a man invited the Sheikh to dinner. He رحمة الله عليه went to the place of invitation and began eating. After putting only one morsel into his mouth he realized that the income of the man who had invited him was not lawful. He atonce left the food and came back. He said that he felt for about two months the darkness of the one morsel he had swallowed. He felt during these two months an urge to commit sins. The experience related by the Sheikh appears to us to be incredible, because our chests are filled with darkness. Take the example of a white-sheet of cloth full of spots. If one more spot is added it will make no difference. On the other hand even if a small spot is put

somehow on a spotless white cloth sheet, it can be easily seen from a distance. Such is the similitude of the hearts of saintly men. So it is not at all surprising that Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yaqoob Nanotawi رحمة الله عليه instantly felt the adverse effect of the unlawful morsel which created in his pure heart an urge to commit sins. This was due to the darkness spread by that unlawful morsel. There is something which is called inner "*Barkat*" by virtue of which man develops in him spiritual integrity and ameliorates his conduct, character and thoughts.

We are caught in the mire of materialism

Today we are caught in the mire of materialism and are hankering after money, worldly comforts and luxuries and show. As a result the inner essence of everything has gone out of our minds and talks about these matters appear to be alien to us. We neither understand the meaning of "*Barkat*", nor do we attach any importance to it. If someone says that Rupees one thousand will be paid for eating food in this way we shall hurry to do that but if it is promised that eating in such and such style contains "*Barkat*" or blessings we shall pay no attention to this promise, because we do not know what is "*Barkat*".

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has guided us through his Ahadith to the sources of "*Barkat*" and has also warned us against the ways which have no "*Barkat*". We cannot understand nor can we attain "*Barkat*" unless we follow sincerely the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has laid emphasis on licking the fingers after taking food because the small particles of food sticking to the fingers may have "*Barkat*" in them.

Is it against the rules of etiquette to lick the fingers?

We are living today in an age of fashions. The people have invented for themselves new rules of etiquette. If they are taking food on a dining-cloth along with others, they consider it a violation of etiquette to lick their fingers to clean them of the traces of curry sticking to them. They do not lick their fingers for fear of being dubbed as ill-mannered and un-civilized.

Good manners and civilized behaviour lie in following the *Sunnah*

Remember that good manners and civilized behaviour consist in following the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. What the Holy Prophet ﷺ has defined as mannerliness is acceptable as good etiquette and not that which this fashion -ridden modern society has invented. These fashions are changing from day to day and have no stability. Something which is in fashion today may go out of fahsion tomorrow.

It is unmannerliness to take food, while standing

Now it has become a fashion to take food in standing posture. A man holds the plate with one hand and eats with the otehr hand. Bread, curry, salad and all other items are dumped in the same plate. When the guests approach the dining tabels there is a competition among them to snatch the foods and fill their plates in quantities which they cannot eat. Nobody objects to this way of eating, although in the past this style of eating was condemned as being out of etiquette and unmannerly. The change of fashion is deplorable. The human style of eating is to eat while sitting comfortably.

Do not be a slave to fashion

So do not be a slave to fashion, because fashion is changing from day to day. It is not at all reliable. Reliable is the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which guides us to "*Barkat*". The *Sunnah* way of eating is a source of "*Barkat*" In this world as well as in the Hereafter. If you unfortunately give up this blessed way of living you will expose yourself to anxieties, worries and failures. There will be darkness instead of light in your heart. In order to reap "*Barkat*" you must lick your fingers after eating as emphasized in this Hadith.

It is an act of *Sunnah* to eat with three fingers

It was a regular habit of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to take food with three fingers, i.e. the thumb, the index fingers and the middle finger. He generally picked up the morsel with these three fingers. The ulama have pointed out that one reason for this habit was that in those days the meal used to be very simple; there were not many items on the dining-cloth, as is today. The second reason is that the morsels taken up with three fingers are small and easy to digest. Another reason is that it is not expressive of greed as are large morsels of food. Small morsels picked up with three fingers are expressive of contentment. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ generally used only three fingers in eating, although, in rare cases he has employed four fingers also. It occurs in certain narratives that once he ﷺ used all the five fingers in taking food. Thereby he ﷺ has taught his *Ummah* that it is also lawful to take food with four and five fingers.(Sahih Muslim.... chap. eating Hadith No: 2031)

Observance of an oder in licking the fingers

Look at the love and concern of the Noble Companions رضی اللہ عنہم of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that they

have preserved and left behind for our convenience every movement of the Prophet ﷺ of Allah. They رضی اللہ عنہم have, thus, infromed us of the order in which he ﷺ used to lick his fingers. The order was firstly the middle finger then the Index finger and in the last the thumb. When the Companions رضی اللہ عنہم met and sat with one another, they talked about the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and induced one another to folow the *Sunnah*. There is, however, no sin in not licking the fingers, except that the man loses the much deserved Barkat.

How long will you fear being laughed at?

You may think that if you lick the fingers after eating, the people will laugh at and dub you as uncivilized and ill-mannered. Remember that you cannot stop the people from laughing at you, you have to ignore them and take a firm resolve to follow the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ at all costs. It is this weakness and shyness on our part that today we find ourselves totally transformed into the western way of life, culture and dress. Has this aping earned for you any respect in the eyes of the westerner? No, even today they look down upon you and do their best to harm you. Why is it so? It is, because you have given up the blessed path of the *Sunnah* to please your western masters. Despite that they consider you to be outmoded, fundamentalists, conservatives and retrogressive.

These taunts are the legacy of the Prophets علیہم السلام

You must make a final resolve to ignore the ridicules and taunts of the people in order to follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet of Allah. It is an old habit of the people to laugh at those who follow the true path. What to say of you, do you

not know that the Prophets of Allah had to face the same taunts and jokes from their people? The Qur'an says:

ما نراك اتبعك الا الذين هم اراذلنا بادى الرأى (سورة هود:٢٧)

> (The polytheists said): We see that only the mean and depressed among us follow you who have no power to think (11:27)

If you are believers and followers of the Prophets of Allah you must remember that these taunts and ridicules are also among the legacies you have inherited from them. Face these pinching taunts with courage and welcome them with open hearts. Remember that unless you pluck up courage and ignore these taunts, you cannot escape them, as the unbelievers will not stop from laughing at you. An urdu poet has very nicely expressed this idea in a couplet:

ہنسے جانے سے جب تک تم ڈرو گے
زمانہ تم پر ہنستا ہی رہے گا

> This means: The people of the world will not refrain from laughing at you as long as you are afraid of their laughter.

Do not care for what the world is saying about you, but care for what the Holy Prophet ﷺ has exhorted you to do vide his sacred *Sunnah*. Try to follow the *Sunnah* and you shall soon see how honour, prosperity and success are attracted towards you.

The announcement of a Great Glad Tidings for following the *Sunnah*

As a recompense for following the *Sunnah* Allah has announced the greatest of glad tidings in the Holy Qur'an:

قل ان كنتم تحبون الله فاتبعونى يحببكم الله (آل عمران:٣١)

> (Say, O Muhammad !) If you love Allah follow me: Allah will love you, and forgive

you your sins. (3:31)

The verse means to suggest that it is not in your power to love Allah as He should be loved. but Almighty Allah will Himself love you if you act upon the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Hazrat Dr. Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say that a man becomes the beloved of Allah at the time he is following the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is an act of *Sunnah* to recite:

اللهم ان اعوذبك من الخبث والخبائث

before entering the latrine and enter it by putting first one's left leg. The moment you put your left leg in the latrine in compliance with the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ you become a beloved of Allah.

Allah will make you His beloved

Similarly, when you are licking your fingers after eating, as this is a *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, you become a beloved of Allah. What have you to do with the people, when the Creator and Master of all is loving you? when He appreciates this act of yours why should you worry about others and what they think of your actions? You should, therefore, try to make the *Sunnah* a part of your life without caring the jokes and taunts of the people.

People say that it is very difficult to follow *Deen* in these times. It is not the times but we ourselves who have created these imaginary difficulties. Just consider, who is standing in your way and what hindrance do you experience in your ease and comfort or what loss of wealth and property do you incur in licking the fingers after eating? Who Knows that by following a small *Sunnah* Allah may bestow upon you a great reward? May Allah help us to follow the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ *Aameen*!

It is lawful to have the fingers licked by others

This Hadith offers another advantage by the words. The *Ulama* have stated that sometimes a man is not able to lick his own fingers on account of some handicap. In such a situation he may have his fingers likced by someone else, say, a child, a cat or a bird. The intention should be to prevent Allah's sustenance from being wasted.

To lick the plate after eating food

عن جابر رضى الله عنه ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم امربلعق الاصابع والصحفة، وقال: انكم لا تدرون في اى طعامكم البركة (صحيح

مسلم، كتاب الاشربة، باب استحباب لعق الاصابع، حديث نمبر ٢٠٣٣)

Hazrat Jabir رضى الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has commanded (the *Ummah*) to lick the fingers and the plate, saying: You do not know which part of your food contains "*Barkat*" (Blessings). Thus, the command requires that the fingers as well as the plate both should be licked. To avoid wastage of food only as much food should be taken in the plate as one can easily eat. By chance if some food in the plate which you cannot eat, leave it in the plate neat and clean on one side of the plate, so that it may be eaten by another person without feeling any disgust. A wrong impression prevails among the people that the food taken in the plate must be eaten in full by the person concerned. This is wrong. The *Shari'ah* hs not imposed any such compulsion.

The spoon should be licked

Sometimes men take their food with spoons and forks. How can such men follow the *Sunnah* of licking the fingers? In such a situation they should lick the spoons to

secure the "*Barkat*" of the food sticking to the spoon. Some *Ulama* have said that this too shall, God willing, secure the "*Barkat*" of licking the fingers.

The morsel which drops down from the hand should be picked up cleaned and eaten

وعن جابر رضى الله عنه ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: اذا وقعت لقمة احد كم فليأ خذ ها فليمط ماكان بهامن اذى وليأ كلها، ولا يدعها للشيطان، ولا يمسح يده بالمنديل حتى يلعق اصابعه، فانه لا يدرى في اى طعامه البر كة (صحيح مسلم، كتاب الاشربة، باب استحباب لعق الاصابع. حديث نمبر ٢٠٣٣)

Hazrat Jabir رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: If anybody's morsel drops down from his hand, he should pick it up clean it of any dirt or dust that may have stuck to it and then eat it, instead of leaving it for Satan. He should also not wipe his hand with a handkerchief, unless he has licked his fingers. This is because he does not know which part of the food contains "*Barkat*"

This Hadith teaches us the Islamic etiquette that if a morsel or any other eatable article drops down it should be picked up, cleaned and eaten, unless it has become too much soiled in dirt to be eaten. Some people feel ashamed to do this but this is not proper. The advice given by the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the Hadith ensures due respect for Allah's sustenance and for availaing the "*Barkat*" contained in it. The same reason for fearing people's taunts and jeering is at work here also. The incident related below will be helpful in understanding the importance of this Hadith.

An incident concerning Hazrat Huzaifah bin Yaman رضی اللہ عنہ

The Hazrat Huzaifah bin Yaman رضی اللہ عنہ was one of the most devoted Companions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He the was known as being a confident of the Prophet ﷺ. At the time when the Muslims attacked Khosran's Empire of Iran, Iran was a world Super Power with a most advanced and sophisticated civilization. The other great power was the Roman Empire but Iran was superior to it in many respects, particularly of its advanced and highly developed culture and civilization. When Iran was invaded the Emperor of Iran, Khosran, invited the Muslims to a reconciliatory negotiation. Hazrat Huzaifah and Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہم accepted the invitation.

We shall not give up our dress

When Hazrat Huzaifah and Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہم proceeded for the negotiation and were entering Khosran's Palace, they were putting on their simple Arabic dress which might possibly have become dirty during the journey. Seeing them in that condition, the gate-keeper stopped them, objected to their poor clothes and offered them gowns to put on for appearing before the Royal Court. Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ said to the gate-keeper if it was compulsory to wear this gown they were not prepared to attend the Emperor's court. They would meet the Emperor in the dress they were wearing or would go back without meeting him.

You have seen the sword, now see the arm also that will wield it

The gate-keeper sent words to the court authoriteis telling them that strange men had arrived who were not

accepting the gowns offered to them to wear for attending the court. In the meantime Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ was re-arranging the scraps of cloth with which the broken part of the sword had been unrapped. The gate-keeper wanted to see the sword closely. It was given to him. When he examined it he said tauntingly: Are you going to conquer Iran with this sword ? Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ replied: so far you have seen only the sword; you have not yet seen the arm that will wield it. The gate-keeper desired to see the arm also. Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ asked the gate-keeper to get the strongest shield available there to ward off the stroke of his sword. Then a steel shield was brought and a man held it before Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ struck the shield with his sword with such might that the shield was cut in two. All present were stunned to see that scene. The gate-keeper then sent words to the court that the new-comer had cut the strongest shield in two. Then they were called in.

Should I give up the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the sake of these fools?

When they went in, food was served to welcome them and they started eating it. While eating, a morsel dropped down from his hand. There is a Hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that on such occasion the morsel should be picked up, cleaned and eaten as a mark of respect for Allah's sustenance and to save it from being wasted. Hazrat Huzaifah رضی اللہ عنہ remembered this Hadith and held down his hand to pick up the fallen morsel. A man sitting by his side hinted to him not to do that in the court of an Empire that was regarded as the Super-power of that age. That action would degrade them in their eyes. The occasion was, therefore, not appropriate to follow that

Sunnah. Hazrat Huzaifah رضی اللہ عنہ replied saying:

اترك سنة رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لهؤلاء الحمقى؟

"Should I give up the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ for the sake of these fools? I cannot give up the *Sunnah*, whatever these infidels thought of us or how contemptuously they laughed at us. So he picked up the morsel, cleaned it and ate it.

These are the conquerors of Iran

It was the custom of Khosran's court that, while he was sitting on his throne, the rest were standing in their respective places. Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ told Khosran that they followed the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ who had forbidden that, one man should be sitting and the rest standing before him as is the custom in his court. They were, therefore, not prepared to take part in the negotiations in that way. So, either they should be provided to sit down or the Emperor should also stand before them. Khosran felt his insult in meeting this demand. He refused to talk to them and ordered that they should be sent back with a basket full of earth placed on their heads. Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ placed that basket on his head. While leaving the court, he رضی اللہ عنہ said: O Khosran! Rememebr that you have bestowed upon us the earth (i.e. land) of Iran. The Iranians were very superstitious people who took this event as an ill omen. Khosran, therefore, sent some of his men to overtake them and get back the basket of earth. They could not find Hazrat Rub'ee bin 'Amir رضی اللہ عنہ who quickly escaped with the basket of Iran's earth.

The Pride of Khosran was levelled with the dust

Now consider a bit! Did they attain any honour by their pride or are we attaining any honour today by renouncing the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ? It is the Noble Companions رضی اللہ عنہم who attained honour by eating the fallen morsels in compliance with the *Sunnah* and turned to disgrace the pride of the arrogant Emperor of Iran Khosran. The Holy Prophet ﷺ had already said in a Hadith:

اذا هلك كسرى فلا كسرى بعده

After this Khosran has perished there will be no Khosran again.

The Hadith proved true cent percent and Khosran's name was effaced forever. We must, therefore, strictly follow the *Sunnah* of licking the fingers after eating and eating a fallen morsel after picking it up and cleaning it.

It is not lawful to give up a *Sunnah* for fear of being ridiculed

I have already mentioned that it is lawful to ignore a *Sunnah* if it is feared that some careless and the so called advanced Muslims will reidcule the followers of that *Sunnah* and involve themselves in infidelity and apostacy by this ridiculing. It is lawful to suspend on such an occasion action on this *Sunnah*. For example, it is nearer to *Sunnah* to take food sitting on the ground. If you are taking food in a hotel or a restraurant furnished with dining tables and chairs, you should not insist on taking food there on the ground, in compliance with the *Sunnah*. This may lead to ridicule the *Sunnah*. In such a situation it is better to ignore the *Sunnah* and take food, sitting round dining tables and chairs as a matter of expedience.

This concession holds good only in such situations

in which it is lawful to abandon this *Sunnah*. It cannot be abandoned for fear of being ridiculed or laughed at, where it is neither lawful nor permissible to abandon it under an injunction of the *Shari'ah*. Again, there is a difference between the Muslims and the unbeleivers in this matter. There is a possibility that by ridiculing a *Sunnah* a Muslim may lose his *Eeman* (Faith). As regards the unbelievers, they are already deprived of Eeman and it makes no difference if they laugh at the Muslims for following this *Sunnah*.

What to do, if a guest arrives at the time of taking food?

وعن جابر رضى الله عنه قال: سمعت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم يقول: طعام الواحد يكفى الاثنين، وطعام الاثنين يكفى الاربعة، وطعام الاربعة يكفى الثمانية (صحيح مسلم، كتاب الاشربة، باب فضيلة المواساة فى الطعام، حديث نمبر ٢٠٥٩)

Hazrat Jabir رضى الله عنه has narrated that he heard the Holy Prophet ﷺ saying: One man's food is sufficient for two, and two men's food is sufficient for four and four men's food is sufficient for eight men. (Sahih Muslim)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised in this Hadith, saying: If you are taking food, and a guest or a needy person suddenly arrives, do not turn him away out of fear that one man's food will not suffice for the new comer. He ﷺ has assured that one man's food will be sufficient for the other man also. Therefore, share your food with him and Almighty Allah shall create blessing in the food that is available. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also explained in the Hadith that one man's food becomes quite sufficient for two,

two men's for four and four men's for eight men.

Do not turn away a beggar with a menace

A strange custom has developed among us that we regard as our guest only that person who is on an equal footing with us or is a friend or a relation of ours equal to us in status. If a helpless, poor man arrives none accepts him as his guest, but he is regarded as a beggar. In fact, he too is a guest sent to you by Allah. As a Muslim it is your responsibility to welcome this man also as a God-sent guest and share your food with him, if you are taking your food. If a beggar calls on you at this time, it is not good to turn him away dejected. Give him something, then let him go. Care should be taken in all circumstances not to turn a beggar away with a scolding. Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an:

واما السائل فلا تنهر (سورة الضحى)

Do not, therefore, turn away the beggar. (93:10)

When the Holy Qur'an itself is warning us against turning away a beggar, we should be careful not to let such an occasion arise. This is to avoid harmful and dangerous repurcussions.

An incident full of morals

Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has related in his printed sermons the story of a very rich man. Once he was going to take food with his wife. The food was nicely cooked and he sat at the dining-cloth with a great desire and fondness. In the meantime a beggar called at the door. He felt offended at the arrival of the beggar and turned him away with a stern scolding and contempt. Sometimes a man's action attracts Alah's wrath. After sometime enmity developed between the couple which ultimately led to divorce. The divorced wife passed the period of her '*Iddah*' (the prescribed period of

waiting) with her parents and after its expiry married another rich man. One day she was taking food with her new husband when a beggar knocked at the door. The wife told the husband that a sad event had happend with her in the past, so she must give something to the beggar to ward off Allah's wrath. The husband agreed to the proposal. When she went out she saw to her great surprise that the beggar was her first divorced husband. Thereafter she related to her present husband the old story in detail.

This second husband told his wife that he had to relate a still more surprising story. He told his wife that the beggar who had called at the door of the wife's first husband was he (the second husband) himself.

Take warning, O, men! see how Almighty Allah transferred the wealth of the first husband to the second one and the latter's poverty to the former.

May Almighty Allah by His mercy protect us all from bad times, *Aameen*!

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has sought refuge with Allah from such ups and downs:

اللهم انی اعوذبك من الحور بعد الكور

Anyway, try to avoid scolding a beggar, as far as possible. Sometimes occasions do arise when it becomes necessary to scold a beggar. the *Fuqaha* (Jurists) have allowed to scold beggars on rare occasions. It is, however, much better to get rid of a beggar by giving him something.

This Hadith has a second meaning. Do not make the quantity of food you eat fixed and unalterable. In times of need you should be prepared to reduce the quantity you eat. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ has stated that one, two and four men's food becomes sufficient for two, four and eight men respectively.

The advice of Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani رحمة الله عليه

Most acts of *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ concerning the etiquette of taking food have been discussed in the foregoing pages. All that is wanted is that we should resolve firmly to act upn them from today. By acting upon these minor items of the Prophet's *Sunnah* you will receive the spiritual light and other wonderful benefits which Allah has palced in following the *Sunnah*.

What Mujaddid Alf Sani رحمة الله عليه has said in this behalf deserves to be noted with rapt attention. He رحمة الله عليه has said:

Almighty Allah taught me all the external courses of knowledge and granted me perfection in them. Then it occurred to me that I should also know what the respected *Sufis* (mystics) say and what knowledge they have with them. I, therefore, turned to them and acquired knowledge from them. The respected *Sufis* have four orders of *Tasaw-wuf* (Mysticism), i.e. the *Suharwardiyah*, the *Qadriyah*, the *Chistiyah* and *Naqashbandiyah*. I wanted to know what knowledge every one of these, imparted of its disciples. I joined everyone of these, learnt and practised their disciplines and went through all their usual exertions and exercises. As a result, Almighty Allah bestowed upon me such a status that the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself put on my body the robe of honour. Thereafter, Almighty Allah raised me up to such an elevated station that if I disclose its reality, the *Ulama* of the external knowledge will issue against me their rulings of *Kufr* (infidelity), and the *Ulama* of the internal knowledge issue their ruling of *Zandaqah* (Heresy). Even so, Almighty Allah has granted me, by His mercy, all these spiritual ranks. Now I address to Allah a prayer. He will-God willing - receive salvation who joins me in this *Du'a* by uttering "*Aameen*".

O Allah, help me to act upon the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ-*Aameen.*

O Allah, let me live on the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - *Aameen.*

O Allah, let me die on the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - *Aameen.*

Act upon the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

We have gone far enough in our survey of these topics. At the end we come to the conclusion that if we want to acquire good, we can acquire it only by following the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and again what Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani رحمة الله عليه has said: I have come to this conclusion after traversing all these places and you will arrive on it the very first day that you can acquire your heart's desire only by following the *Sunnah* and, not otherwise. So resolve firmly just today to act upon all the *Sunnahs* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This will give you light, peace and a happy life. The happiness of life does not lie in disobedience and sins. Inquire about the enjoyments of life from those who have moulded their lives on the pattern of the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Hazrat Sufyan Sauri رحمة الله عليه has said that if the Kings of the world come to know the enjoyment and pleasures of life which Almighty Allah has bestowed upon us, they will wage a war against us in order to snatch from us our privilege. Anyone can achieve this honour and advantge of acting upon the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Just by this easy formula of elixir and see the result.

May Allah help us all to act upon the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - *Aameen*!

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 46

ETIQUETTES OF DRINKING

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue : Jame‘ Masjid Baitul-Mukarram
Gulshan-e-Iqbal,
Karachi

Date : 6th August, 1993.

ETIQUETTES OF DRINKIG

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيأت اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلى اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

اما بعد

فاعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم، بسم الله الرحمٰن الرحيم

عن انس رضى الله عنه ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم كان يتنفس فى الشراب ثلاثا يعنى يتنفس خارج الاناء (مسلم كتاب الاشربة باب كراهة التنفس فى نفس الاناء)

وعن ابن عباس رضى الله عنهما قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم لاتشربوا واحدا كشرب البعير ولكن اشربوا مثنى وثلاث وسموا اذا انتم شربتم وا حمد وا اذا انتم رفعتم (ترمذى، كتاب الاشربة، باب

ماجاء في النفس في الاناء)

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek His forgiveness and we believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our souls and from the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom He guides and there is none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah the One who has no partner. I also bear witness that our sire, and our authority and our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah have mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی الله عنهم and bless them and salute them all in great abundance.

The first equiette of drinking water

The Ahadith mentioned so far dealt with the etiquettes of taking meals. The Ahadith being mentioned today deal mostly with the etiquettes of drinking water. The first of these was narrated by Hazrat Anas رضی الله عنه who said: The Holy Prophet ﷺ used to drink water or any other beverage in three breaths and that during drinking he ﷺ breathed after taking the pot away from his mouth.

The other Hadith was narrated by Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas رضی الله عنه He has reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: If you have to drink anything, do not drink it all at once, (in one breath) like a camel but drink it in two or three breaths. Begin drinking with Allah's name and praise Him after taking off the pot.

My father Hazrat Mufti Muhmmad Shafi Sahib رحمة

الله عليه has compiled a small treatise, titled "The virtues of (Bismillah) and the rules about it. It is a very comprehensive writing having enlightening directions about drinking anything. In this treatise my respected father رحمة الله عليه has advised us to think how and wherefrom the water comes to us.

Miracle of the Divine water-supply system

Almighty Allah has made the oceans a reservoir for water. He had made the huge quantity of water so stored up saltish. If the water was made sweet it would become putridified after sometime. It is on account of these sea-salts deposited in the sea-water, that the water remains fresh and pure. How could man get even this salt-water from the far off seas? To solve this difficulty Allah raises the monsoon clouds from the surface of the seas, so miraculously that they absorb in their bodies the sea-water leaving the salts in the sea. Thus, the clouds rise up laden only with sweet, potable water. Then in His infinite wisdom

Almighty Allah did not rain down the entire world's requirement of water in one instalment, asking men to store up this huge quantity with them. This was only impossible, as men could not procure such a huge reservoir for this purpose. All-compassionate Allah has Himself solved this difficulty also. He has said in the Holy Qur'an :

فَاَسْكَنّٰهُ فِي الْاَرْضِ (سورة المؤمنون:١٨)

That is : We sent down from the sky water in a measure, then we stored it up in the earth. (23:18)

In storing the water in this way under the earth, Allah first sent the rains on the high mountains and

stored water there in the form of ice-blocks. Melting slowly and slowly, the water reaches the plains through rivers and rivulets. From there it is taken to fields where it is required for irrigation. This is not all. Some volume of water sinks down into the bottom of the earth running through subterranean canals from which it is raised up to the surface of the earth through wells and other mechanical devices. Praise to Allah! how wonderfully He has stored the water in a huge underground reservoir and has provided a supply-line to enable His servants and creatures to obtain their requirements almost free of charge. It was not possible for the most sophisticated and advanced technology of artificial hydraulic engineering to provide such an unfailing water-supply system. Now think; after passing through so many stages a glass of water has reached you? This is why you are being advised to pronounce the words *Bismillah* (بسم الله) before drinking water.

The entire Kingdom is hardly worth a glass of water

Caliph Haroon Rasheed was once wandering in a forest on a hunting spree. By chance he lost his way. He had also no food with him. While wandering hither and thither, he became very thirsty. At last he came across a hut and asked the dweller for a glass of water. The man provided water to the Caliph. When the Caliph held the glass to drink the water, the man requested him to wait for a moment. He addressed the Caliph, saying: What price would you pay for this glass of water, if the water was not available free of charge and your thirst had the same severity? The Caliph said as it was the question of saving life he would purchase it for the half of his Kingdom.

Hearing this answer the man allowed the Caliph to drink the water and the Caliph drank it. The man then asked Caliph, saying: If the water you have drunk just now is blocked up in your body and you become unable to urinate what would you spend for its remedy? The Caliph replied that the blockade of the urine was a more serious and fatal malady. He would offer the remaining half of the Kingdom to get rid of the malady. After hearing this reply the man said: The price of one glass of water is your entire Kingdom. Have you ever considered how many glasses of water you drink from morning till evening and what a great blessing is this water!

The command that you should drink water after pronouncing the words بسم الله (*Bismillah*) is to make you realize this great blessing of Almighty Allah. In addition, it is a form of worship deserving of a reward to pronounce this sacred name of Allah.

Cool water is a great blessing

Hazrat Haji Imdadullah Sahib رحمة الله عليه once asked his disciple, Hazrat Thanawi, saying: O Ashraf Ali, whenever you feel thirsty, always drink cool water, so that every pore of your body may feel grateful to Almighty Allah. When a believer satisfies his thirst with cool water, he is sure to feel grateful to Allah spontaneously. That is why cool water was one of the favourite objects of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

We do not find any narrative to show that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had a special choice for any food. He ﷺ was, however, fond of cool water. There was a well named Ghars at a distance of two miles from Madinah which was noted for its cool water. Arrangements were made to provide water for the Holy Prophet ﷺ from that well. He ﷺ had also left a will that after death the water of that

well should be used for giving bath to his ﷺ sacred body. The ruins of this well can still be seen, although it is now a dry well. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was fond of cool water, because it induces man to express gratitude to Allah.

Water should be drunk in three breaths

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us in these Ahadith the etiquettes of drinking water. One of them is that a man should drink water in three breaths. The *Ulama* have pointed out that drinking in three breaths is better and nearer to the *Sunnah*, but it is also lawful to drink water in two and four breaths. It is, however, not appropriate to drink it in one breath. It is also injurious medically to do so. Any way, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden to drink water in this way. The *Ulama*, however, agree that it has not been declared to be a sin to drink water in one breath; it is only a violation of the *Sunnah* and it is undesirable.

The different capacities and positions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

In fact, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has different capacities and positions in relation to his ﷺ *Ummah*. In his capacity as a Messenger of Allah, he ﷺ was entrusted with conveying to the people the message of Allah - Islam. If he ﷺ has forbidden something in his capacity as a Messenger that thing will become unlawful (*Haram*). Another capacity of him is that of a kind guide. If he ﷺ has forbidden his *Ummah* from some action out of kindness and well-wishing, it only means that the action is not good nor profitable; it does not mean that it has been declared unlawful and a sin. If a man does an action in violation of such advice, he will not become a sinner. It should be borne in mind that not only will a person who bears in his heart some love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ give up

all that has been declared unlawful but he ﷺ will also shun those acts which the Prophet of Allah ﷺ did not appreciate or approve.

Drink water and earn recompense

I have clarified above that it is neither unlawful nor a sin to drink water in one breath. It is, however, a fact that a true lover of the Holy Prophet ﷺ will not go near such acts which the Holy Prophet ﷺ did not like. It is, therefore, the bounden duty of a Muslim not to do, as far as possible acts which did not please the Holy Prophet ﷺ, even though such acts may not be sins. Why should then a man drink water only in one breath instead of the approved and desirable way of drinking in three breaths? This way of drinking is a *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ which will earn you spiritual light and blessings and Allah's love. Why should you then lose such invaluable gains which cost you nothing except a little care and attention?

The Distinctive mark of a Muslim

Every religion and community has some distinctive mark by which it is recognized. This way of drinking water in three breaths is one of the distinctive marks of a Muslim. In the past children were taught to drink water in three breaths. However, the values have changed now. The children are left unbridled to go the way they like. They are not checked if found violating the rules of Islamic etiquettes. Some lovers of the Holy Prophet ﷺ have been seen drinking water in three breaths even if the quantity of the water was hardly sufficient for one breath.

While breathing, remove aside the glass from the mouth

عن ابي قتاده رضى الله عنه ان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم نهى ان يتنفس في الاناء (ترمذى، كتاب الاشربة، باب ماجاء فى كراهية التنفس فى الاناء)

Hazrat Abu Qatadah رضی الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden to breathe into the pot.

This means that, if one has to breathe while drinking water one should breathe after removing the pot or the glass away from the mouth. It has been narrated in another Hadith that a man called upon the Holy Prophet ﷺ and complained to him ﷺ that while drinking water he had to breathe many times. Then he asked how he should breathe. The Holy Prophet ﷺ advised him that while breathing, he should remove the glass away from his mouth. It is against the *Sunnah* and out of etqiuette to breathe into and blow over the glass, while drinking water.

Only one *Sunnah* act may earn the reward of many acts of *Sunnah*

Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to tell us that to act upon the *Sunnah* carries reward so generously that they may be compared to a windfall. If you make the intention to comply with all the acts of *Sunnah* involved in a single act, you shall reap the benefits of all these *Sunnah* acts. For example, when going to drink water, make the intention to drink it in three breaths, to remove the glass away from your mouth on each breath and so on. Here you reap the reward for two *Sunnah* acts only in one act, along with the spiritual lights and blessigns attached therewith. By acting upon the *Sunnah* a man becomes a beloved of Allah. So you to shall receive this divine love. Why should one not

earn such benefits and blessings by bestowing a little care and attention on these easy acts of the *Sunnah*?

Distribute thigns from the right side

عن انس رضی الله عنه ان رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلم اتی بلبن قد شیب بماء، وعن یمینه اعرابی، وعن یساره ابوبکر رضی الله عنه، فشرب، ثم اعطی الاعرابی. وقال: الایمن فلا یمن (ترمذی، کتاب الاشربة، باب ماجاء ان الایمن احق بالشراب)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned in this Hadith another important rule of etiquette which is a distinctive feature of the Muslim *Ummah*. This rule is also being widely ignored in our society. The rule has been stated in the Hadith with reference to an event. A man brought to the Holy Prophet ﷺ a mixture of milk and water. (This mixing of water with the milk was not by way of adulteration. Milk diluted with water was considered among the Arabs more nourishing and digestive). The Holy Prophet ﷺ drank some portion of the milk and desired to distribute the rest among those present there. On the Prophet's right side was a bedouin and on his left side was Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی الله عنه. The Holy Prophet ﷺ passed on the left-over milk to the bedouin who was sitting on the right side, ignoring Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی الله عنه He ﷺ at the same time said: الایمن فلا یمن, i.e. distribution should begin from the right side.

The status of Hazrat Siddiq Akbar رضی الله عنه

The Holy Prophet ﷺ attached so much importance to this order of distribution that he ﷺ ignored in this matter a godly personality like Hazrat Siddiq Akbar رضی الله عنه - the highest and most honoured personality in the sight of Allah on the surface of the earth, after the Prophets of Allah علیهم

السلام. Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani رحمة الله عليه has given an idea of the status of Hazrat Siddiq رضی الله عنه by an example. He رحمة الله عليه has said: If a Prophet of Allah stands before a mirror, then the personality standing before the mirror is the Propeht عليه السلام and his image reflected inside the mirror is the "*Siddiq*". Thus a "*Siddiq*" is a complete reflection and copy of Prophethood. He رضی الله عنه is a vicegerent of the Prophet عليه السلام in the true sense of the word. Hazrat Umar Farooq رضی الله عنه once said about Hazrat Siddiq رضی الله عنه : If Hazrat Siddiq Akbar رضی الله عنه exchanges with me all the good deeds of my entire lifetime for one act of his of passing that one night with the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the cave of "*Saur*", while migrating to Madinah Munaw-warah, the bargain will be cheap for him (i.e. Hazrat Umar Farooq رضی الله عنه . Notwithstanding this highly elevated station of Hazrat Siddiq Akbar رضی الله عنه , the Holy Prophet ﷺ passed on the cup of milk left-over to the bedouin sitting on the right side, ignoring Hazrat Siddiq Akbar رضی الله عنه . This was in compliance with the principle, "الايمن فالايمن" because at the time of the distribution of something the man on the right has a preference.

The right side contains blessings

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us in this Hadith that at the time of distributing something, e.g., food, water, dates, etc., the distribution should be commenced from the right side. The Arabic word "يمين" means the right side and this word also means "blessed." Beginning work from the right side brings blessings. That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ has commanded that we should eat, drink, put on shoes with the right hand or from the right side. When walking alongside a road, we should also take to the right side. Following this principle the Holy Prophet ﷺ combed

his hair from the right side, then from the left. To begin, things from the right side is an act of *Sunnah* and a means of earning blessings.

Importance of the right side

There is another Hadith dealing with the same topic.

Once some beverage was presented to the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He ﷺ drank a portion of it, leaving the rest of it. At that time a young boy was sitting on the right side of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. On the left were people grown up in age and senior in learning and experience. Feeling regard for the people sitting on the left on account of their age and accomplishments, the Holy Prophet ﷺ asked the young boy to forgo his right to take the drink first in favour of his seniors sitting on the left. The boy was intelligent. He replied, saying: O Prophet of Allah, if there had been something else, I would surely have preferred these respectable men to myself. Here the question is of sharing a drink which has remained after your drinking. So I request you to favour me with it, if it is my right. The Holy Prophet ﷺ, therefore, handed over the drink to the boy. This young boy was Hazrat Abdullah bin ʿAbbas رضی اللہ عنہ. (Muslim the Book of Drink, etc...)

Note the great importance the Holy Prophet ﷺ attached to the right side by favouring a young boy with the drink, although many elders and seniors were sitting on the left side, and even the Prophet ﷺ himself desired that the elder persons should be favoured with the gift of the drink. He ﷺ however, did not violate the principle of starting things from the right side. Everyday we find occasions on which we have to distribute things, gifts, e.g., food, sweets. On these occasions, if we follow the principle of commencing distribution from the right side

with the intention of complying with the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, we shall soon realize the blessings and lights emanating from this act of *Sunnah*.

Drinking water by mouth from a big water-container

عن ابی سعید الخدری رضی الله عنه، قال:نهی رسول الله صلی الله علیه وسلم عن اختناث الاسقیه، یعنی ان تکسر افواهها ویشرب منها (مسلم، کتاب الاشربة، باب آداب الطعام والشراب)

In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned another rule of etiquette regarding drinking water. Hazrat Abu Saeed Khudri رضی الله عنه has narrated: The Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited drinking water by putting the mouth on the openings of big water containers like pitchers and water skin-bags, commonly in use in those days.

Two reasons for this prohibition

The learned men have mentioned two reaosns for prohibiting this way of drinking. Firstly, such containers hold large quantities of water. This water may possibly contain something harmful and may have become injurious for health. This happens when some animal (rats etc) falls into such containers and renders the water poisonous, or polluted from the Shara'ee point.

Secondly, they have pointed out that when a man drinks water direct by mouth from such a large water containers quantity of the water may get down into his stomach and damage his normal water absorption system leading to serious repurcussions.

The kindness of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to his *Ummah*

As I have already mentioned, the prohibitions which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has imposed on his *Ummah* are of two kinds:

(i) Those which are unlawful and involve sin and

(ii) Those which are neither unlawful nor a sin, yet they are indcedent and contrary to the rules of etiquette.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has sometimes himself done such things only to show that they are not sins, yet being against the rules of etiquette, they should better be avoided. Thus, it occurs in the Ahadith that on rare occasiosn the Holy Prophet ﷺ has himself drunk water by putting his sacred mouth on the openings of skin water-bags. The *Ulama* have explained that this prohibition applies to all big water containers like skin-bags, large earthen pots and other metallic cans. There may, of course, be some exceptions to this rule which are dealt with in the next Hadith.

Drinking water with the mouth placed on the opening of skin Water bags

وعن ام ثابت كبشة بنت ثابت، اخت حسان بن ثابت رضى الله عنه وعنها قالت: دخل على رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فشرب من فى قرية معلقة قائما، فقمت الى فيها، فقطعته (ترمذی، کتاب الاشربة، باب ماجاء فی عن اختناث الاسقية)

Hazrat Kabshah, daughter of Hazrat Sabit and a sister of Hazrat Hassan bin Sabit رضی الله عنه has narrated, saying: Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ called at our house. A skin water-bag was hanging in the house and he ﷺ stood up and drank water from it with his sacred mouth. By this act he ﷺ showed that it was not unlawful to drink water

by putting the mouth direct on to the water-bag. The prohibition was imposed only as a matter of kindness and advice. Hazrat Kabshah رضی اللہ عنہا has narrated that after, the Holy Prophet ﷺ had left her house, she cut off the part of the bag on which he ﷺ had placed his mouth and preserved that piece of skin as a sacred relic of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

How sacred becomes the spot that comes in contact with the Prophet's sacred lips!

All his Companions رضی اللہ عنہم had a burning love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, ever ready to sacrifice their lives for the beloved Prophet ﷺ. An example of this ardent love and regard is in Hazrat Kabshah رضی اللہ عنہا who took care to preserve the piece of the skin-bag which the sacred lips of the Holy Prophet ﷺ had touched. She cut off that rare piece from the bag and preserved it in her house as an invaluable relic from the Prophet of Allah ﷺ.

This hair became sacred

Hazrat Abu Makhdoorah رضی اللہ عنہ is a companion whom the Holy Prophet ﷺ had appointed as a *Muazzin* in the Holy city of Makkah. He embraced Islam at a very tender age. The Holy Prophet ﷺ placed his sacred hand on the boy's head, as people generally do with small boys to show their affection. Hazrat Abu Makhdoorah رضی اللہ عنہ said that he never in his lifetime shaved the hair on that part of his head that had come in direct contact with the sacred hand of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He used to mention proudly that the hair on that spot had become sacred by coming in contact with the sacred hand of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The nature of sacred Relics

These incidents provide a proof that there is no objection to preserving as sacred relics some thing belonging or related to the Holy Prophet ﷺ or for that mater, to a Companion رضی اللہ عنہ, *Tabi'een* or *Wali* or a saint. Nowadays people have become extremists about this issue. Some men become irritated to see some relic and regard this attitude as a form of *shirk*, while there are others who regard these relics as everything. The truth lies in between the two extremes. One should not place so much faith in these relics as to touch the boundary of shirk. Likewise, one should not disregard these sacred relics, so as to become disrespectful to them. We should realize that Allah showers down His mercy on relics that come from His-beloved servants. You have just now seen the regard of Hazrat Abu Kabshah رضی اللہ عنہا for the piece of the skin-bag touched by the sacred lips of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The sacred Dirhams

Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ offered to Hazrat Jabir رضی اللہ عنہ a few silver Dirhams. Hazrat Jabir رضی اللہ عنہ did not spend these Dirhams the whole of his lifetime, but preserved them as precious and sacred relics from the Prophet of Allah. He left a will for his successors and sons asking them not to spend those Dirhams but preserve them in the house as sacred relics of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. As such, those Dirhams contained to be handed down from generation to generation in his family for a long time. They were however, lost during some disturbance.

The sacred Sweat of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

Hazrat Umme Sulaim, رضی الله عنها a lady Companion, has related that she once saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ sleeping at a place during the severely hot summer of the Arab land. Sweat was flowing down his sacred body. She, therefore, collected and preserved some of the Prophet's sweat in a phial. That sweat was, she admitted more fragnant than musk and saffron. She preserved the phial of the Prophet's sweat in her house and mixed a few drops of it with the scent in her use.

The sacred Hair of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

A lady Companion رضی الله عنها got from somewhere a hair of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. She said that she preserved that hair by putting it in a phial filled with water. Whenever anyone of her tribe fell sick, she would put a drop of the water in the phial with her into some water and give that water to the sick person as a medicne. By virtue of the Prophet's hair Allah brought cure to the patient.

This is how the Noble Companions رضی الله عنهم treated with regard and respect the sacred relics of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The Noble Companions رضی الله عنهم and the sacred Relics

Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی الله عنه has said that there are many places beteen Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarh at which the Holy Prophet ﷺ halted during his journeys between these cities. Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی الله عنه used to get down at each of these places to offer two Rak'ats of Nafl before proceeding ahead.

In this way the Noble Companions رضی الله عنهم took great care in collecting and preserving the sacred relics of

the Holy Prophet ﷺ. However, these Companions رضی الله عنهم were also well aware of the reality of these relics. They did not indulge in exaggeration nor were they extremists in this regard. They did not regard these relics as a means of working miracles, bringing cure or solving difficulties. They never made these relics a cause of Shirk, as people do now.

The origin of Idolation

Idolatry took its origin in Arabia as a result of exaggeration in dealing with relics. The mother of Hazrat Ismael علیه السلام, Hazrat Hajirah علیه السلام stayed near the House of Allah in Makkah Mukarramah. Thereafter there was a battle between Bani Jarham and some other tribe. As a result of this battle the other tribe expelled the people of Bani Jarham from Makkah Mukarramah who were forced to migrate from there. While leaving Makkah Mukarramah, they took with them some soil, stone and the like to serve as relics and some other memorials of the House of Allah and the Holy city of Makkah. When they settled at another place, they protected and preserved these relics with great care and regard. With the passage of time, when none remained to guide them to the right path the later generations made out of these relics some idols which they began to worship as their gods. It is from this incident that Idol worship took its origin in Arabia.

Moderation is necessary in the matter of sacred Relics

If moderation is not maintained in the respect and regard paid to these relics, this gradually leads to *shirk* (Idolatry). It is, therefore, imperative to be cautious in this matter. We should neither treat them with so much regard

as to touch the boundary of *Shirk* nor take them too lightly and carelessly so as to slight and disgrace them.

The right course is that we should preserve them with due regard for the sake of virtue and blessing which they may contain, because they are related to some spiritual guide or saint. Maulana Jami رحمة الله عليه ha said:

I have regard even for a dog belonging to the city of Madinah Munaw-warah, because that dog is related to the Propeht's city. All these emotions emanate from true love. Anything having the slightest connection with the belief attracts respect and regard. Allah grants recompense to him who has respect for the connection that exists between a Wali and Allah, provided he maintains the due limits and does not transgress them. Despite all this people go to the extremes in these matters and suffer from distress and inconvenience.

May Almighty Allah help us in maintaining moderation. *Aameen*!

It is an act of sunnah to drink water while sitting

عن انس رضى الله عنه عن النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم انه نهى ان يشرب الرجل قائما (مسلم، كتاب الاشربة، باب كراهية الشرب قائما)

Hazrat Anas رضى الله عنه has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has prohibited drinking water while standing. The learned have advised in compliance with this Hadith that as far as possible people should not drink water while standing. It was the general practice of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to drink water while sitting.

It is also lawful to drink water while standing

It should be borne in mind that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ prohibited something, even though that is not a sin, he ﷺ himself sometimes ignored that prohibition. This was to

show that the act prohibited was not a sin. That is why there were occasions on which he ﷺ drank water, while standing. You have seen just now how the Holy Prophet ﷺ drank water from the skin-bag of Hazrat Kabshah رضی اللہ عنہا, while standing and with his sacred mouth placed on the opening of the bag. The *Ulama* have, therefore, advised that there is no objection to drinking water standing when one cannot drink it while sitting. As demonstrated by the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself, this is neither unlawful nor a sin. Hazrat Nizal bin Sabrah رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that once Hazrat Ali رضی اللہ عنہ went to the Rahbah Gate (باب الرحبہ) in *Kufah* and there he drank water while standing and said:

انی رأیت رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم فعل کما رأیتمونی فعلت

(صحیح بخاری، کتاب الاشربة، باب الشرب قائما)

> That is: I saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ doing the same as you have seen me doing, that I drank water standing. (Bukhari).

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has, by his own action, shown that no sin is involved in this.

The excellence of drinking while sitting

The etiquette which the Holy Prophet ﷺ taught his Ummah, emphasized it and which he ﷺ himself followed the whole of his lifetime is that he drank water, while sitting as far as possible. This way of drinking water thus became one of the most important acts of his *Sunnah*. For the sake of compensation and reward and its blessings every Muslim should try to act upon it himself and teach others to do the same. The children, in particular, should be instructed to drink water while sitting, as there is no inconvenience in following this *Sunnah*. In addition, it is a means of earning divine reward and blessings. Why should we lose the

virtues, lights and blessings of this *Sunnah*?

Form the habit of acting upon the *Sunnah*

Once Hazrat Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه related the following incident:

"Once I entered a mosque for prayer and was feeling thirsty. I took out water in a pot from the earthen jar provided in the mosque. According to my habit I sat down to drink the weter. A man who was standing nearby objected to this way of my drinking and told me that I could have as well drunk the water while standing. I told him that it was my habit to drink while sitting. The man retorted, saying that it ws a great virtue and honour to form the habit of something which is a *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The man was quite right. When a man is prone to form many habits he should try to form habits which are acts of the Sunnah and which are expected to earn for him great rewards and blessings from Almighty Allah.

The Idea of doing a good Deed is a "guest" from Allah

Hazrat Maulana Maseehullah Khan Sahib of Jalalabad رحمة الله عليه has said when an idea is born in the heart of doing some good deed, this idea in the terminology of the mystics is called "*Warid*" meaning a spontaneous urge. They say that the "idea" is in fact a guest sent by Allah which should be welcomed and honoured. For example, drinking of water while standing you are reminded suddenly that you should follow the *Sunnah* of drinking while sitting and then you sit down to drink. Now this "*Warid*" or the "Idea" will come to you again and again and urge you to follow many other acts of the *Sunnah*.

Thus, you will go on increasing your good deeds. On the other hand if you do not welcome this "divine guest" but turn it away you shall be a loser. For example, you are drinking water standing but you fail to correct yourself when you are reminded that you should drink while sitting, on the ground that thereby you are not commiting a sin. This act of yours is tantamount to turning away the "divine guest". When you repeat this apathy on your part the "Divine Guest" will naturally forsake you. This will result in the hardening of your heart. Instead of the "Idea" to do good deeds, "Ideas" to do bad deeds and commit sins will visit your heart.

The moral we draw from this discussion is that whenever an urge occurs in the heart to act upon the *Sunnah* the opportunity should be seized atonce and the urge should be satisfied by immediate actions. A little practice on this line will put you on the right tract of the *Sunnah.*

How to drink *Zamzam* water?

عن ابن عباس رضی الله عنهما قال: سقيت النبی صلی الله عليه وسلم من زمزم، فشرب وهو قايم. (صحيح بخاری كتاب الاشربه)

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas رضی الله عنه has narrated, saying: Once I offered *Zamzam* water to the Holy Prophet ﷺ to drink. He ﷺ drank the water, while standing.

Some *Ulama* think on the basis of this Hadith it is better and more virtuous to drink *Zamzam* water standing instead of sitting. It has, therefore, become a widely known belief that there are two kinds of water which should be drunk while standing - the *Zamzam* water and the water left after performing ablution (*Wudu*). This is because it is

"*Mustahab*" (desirable) to drink the water left after ablution. There is, however, a class of *Ulama* who are of the opinion that it is better to drink both these kinds of water while sitting. They argue about the Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas رضی الله عنه that the Holy Prophet ﷺ drank the *Zamzam* water because the well being crowded with men and surrounded with mire and mud on all sides, there was no place for the Holy Prophet ﷺ in the vicinity to drink while, sitting. Therefore, this Hadith does not make it a binding that *Zamzam* water should be drunk while standing, and that this way of drinking is better and more virtuous.

It is better and more virtuous to drink, while sitting, *Zamzam* and *Wudu* (Ablution) water

On the basis of a research carried out by him my respected father, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه came to the conclusion that it is better to drink both *Zamzam* as well *Wudu* water, while sitting. It is, however, lawful to drink these waters while standing like any other kind of water, when there is some handicap in drinking while sittting.

Taking food while standing

عن انس رضی الله عنه ان النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم انه نهی ان یشرب الرجل قائما:قال قتاده: فقلنا لانس: فالا كل؟ قال: ذلك اشرا واخبث (صحیح مسلم، کتاب الاشربة، باب کراهیة الشرب قائما)

Hazrat Anas رضی الله عنه has narrated, saying: The Holy Prophet ﷺ has forbidden to drink water, while standing. Hazrat Qatadah رضی الله عنه said to Hazrat Anas رضی الله عنه: What about eating while standing ? The reply was : It is worse and more hateful. (Sahih Muslim).

In other words, to eat while standing is more hateful

than to drink standing.

On the basis of this Hadith some *Ulama* have said that to drink while standing is only disgustful but to eat while standing is prohibited in the *Shari'ah*.

Avoid eating while standing

There are people who argue on the basis of a Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی اللہ عنہ that it is lawful to eat while standing. Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی اللہ عنہ has said in this Hadith that during the time of the Holy Prophet ﷺ they ate while walking and drank water while standing. The people, therefore, ask why they are being forbidden to eat while standing when the Noble Companions رضی اللہ عنہم were free to do so.

You have just now heard the Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی اللہ عنہ, saying: that it is worse and more hateful to eat while standing. In other words it is unlawful to eat while standing. This Hadith refers to the meals eaten regularly two, or three times daily. The other Hadith of Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی اللہ عنہ refers to small bits of eatables, like chocolates almonds and dates etc., which can be eaten while standing and walking. As for the regular meals dinners and lunches, it is totally unlawful to eat them while standing and walking. The system of eating while standing has become very popular in the feasts arranged now. This must be condemned and abolished, because this is not human. It is a beastly way of eating. My respected father described this way of eating as a form of 'grazing' and not as human eating; snatching the food from here and there. This is sheer incivility and also insulting to the guests. For God's sake give up this way of eating. Only a little care is needed to get rid of this beastly system.

Some people justify this by alleging that this ensures economy in expenditure. Only a small space is needed and the heavy cost of furniture is saved. This is meaningless. What about the costly chairs arranged in the marriage hall and the decorative costly lights? In addition, huge amounts are wasted on useless customs, the preparation of video films and so many other sinful practices. Where is the idea of economy? The fact remains that all this is due to the craze of a blind following of fashion and nothing else.

Only a little resolution and courage are needed. Resolve today that you shall entertain your guests with food on dining chairs and tables or on the ground furnished with clean sheets, irrespective of the costs involved. Once you have taken a firm decision to do away with this beastly way of eating and entertaining, Allah will help you in abolishing this inhuman style of feasting.

May Almighty Allah help us all in getting rid of this bad custom. *Aameen*!

وآخر دعوآنا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 47

ETIQUETTES OF INVITING GUESTS TO A FEAST

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue : Jame' Masjid Baitul-Mukarram
Gulshan-e-Iqbal,
Karachi

Date : 9th July, 1993.

ETIQUETTES OF INVITING GUESTS TO A FEAST

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه، ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيات اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادى له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيدنا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالى عليه وعلىٰ اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

اما بعد

عن ابى هريرة رضى الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم اذا دعى احد كم فليجب فان كان صائما فليصل وان كان مفطرا فليطعم

(ترمذی، كتاب الصوم، باب ماجاء فى اجابة الصائم الدعوة)

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek His forgiveness and believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our selves

and from the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom He guides and there is none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah the One who has no partner. I also bear witness that our sire, our authority, our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah have mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی اللہ عنہم and bless them and salute them all in great abundance.

It is the right of a Muslim to accept Invitation

Hazrat Abu Hurairah رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: When anyone of you is invited to a feast, he should accept the invitation. If he is fasting he should pray for the inviter by calling at his house. If he is not fasting he should go and dine with him.

In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has emphasized that a Muslim's invitation should be accepted. He ﷺ has enjoined that to accept an invitation is the right of a Muslim. He ﷺ has said in another Hadith:

حق المسلم على المسلم خمس، ردالسلام، تشميت العاطس، اجابت الدعوة، اتباع الجنائز، وعيادة المريض (صحیح بخاری، کتاب الجنائز، باب الامر باتباع الجنائز)

This means: A Muslim has five rights due to him by another Muslim (i) to respond to سلام (salutation) (ii) to say "یرحمك الله" if anyone sneezes; (iii) to accept an invitation; (iv) to accompany a funeral; and (v) to call on a sick person to inquire after his health.

Thus the Holy Prophet ﷺ has granted a Muslim these five rights due to him by another Muslim. The

acceptance of an invitation is one of them. He ﷺ has, therefore, emphasized that the invitation must be accepted.

The objective of accepting an invitation

An invitation should be accepted with the belief that it is from a brother who has invited his brother with affection. This affection should be acknowledged to please the inviter. To accept an invitation is an act of the *Sunnah* which carries recompense and reward from Allah. It is very bad that the act of acceptance should depend on the standard of the food which may be high or low. It should be accepted at any rate because the exclusive purpose is to please the inviting brother. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in another Hadith:

ولو دعيت الى كراع لقبلت (صحيح بخاری، کتاب الهبة، باب القليل من الهبة)

This means: I shall accept an invitation even if it is for eating a goat's leg.

In these days a feast of goat's trotter is regarded as a very nice and attractive dish but in the Prophet's days it was considered to be worthless. An invitation to a feast must be accepted with the intention of pleasing a brother. No distinction should be made between a rich and a poor inviter. On the contrary, it is better and more virtuous to accept the invitation of a poor man.

There is a spiritual light in a feast in which only boiled rice with *Dal* (curry of cereals) is served

I have heard this story many times from my respected father رحمة الله عليه about a grass-cutter of Deoband (India) who earned a living by cutting and selling grass. He did not earn more than six pice a week. Being a single person he spent two pice on his food, two pice on charity and retained the remaining two pice as a saving. After

every one or two months he entertained with this saving some saintly professors of the Darul-Uloom (university) of Deoband. The entertainment consisted only of boiled rice and *Dal*. My father told me that at that time Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Yaqoob Nanotawi Sahib رحمة الله عليه was the Rector of the University. He said that he anxiously waited the whole month for the entertainment of the grass-cutter. The reason was that the spiritual light and satisfaction which he received from that simple food could not be obtained from the best of rich dishes generally served in rich banquets.

The reality of a feast lies in the expression of "Affection"

The reality of inviting persons to a feast and of accepting the invitation lies in the expression of affection. It was the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he ﷺ never turned down an invitation, however poor and lowly the inviter was. Sometimes he ﷺ walked miles to attend a feast. So the reality of an invitation lies in the fact that it should be issued with affection and sincerity and it should be accepted with the same feelings of affection and sincerity. Only then will a feast contain and radiate spiritual light and fetch to both the parties reward and recompense.

Invitation to feast or invitation to enmity

Today our feast and banquets are subjected to useless customs and formalities. To accept or reject an invitation to such feasts is a difficult matter. In either case, there are suspicions and complaints. That is why Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه said that an invitation to a feast should not lead to enmity. A feast should not be made a cause of

inconvenience and distress. Some people issue invitations and insist on its acceptance without considering the difficulties and loss of time the acceptance and attendance may entail. This is no feast; it is a source of distress. If you are to gain someone's affection through arranging a feast, you should first think about providing comfort to the guest and avoiding inconvenience to him.

The best form of a Feast

Hakimul-Ummat, Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه used to say that there are three categories of feasts-viz., the best, the middle and the lowest. During the present conditions of the society, the best form of feast is to present some cash to the guest invited. This will cause no inconvenience to him and he will be free to spend the amount according to his need and choice. This way of arranging a feast is more comfortable and beneficial to the guest and free from any inconvenience to him.

The middle-category of a Feast

The seconed category of a feast consists in sending the food to the invited guest at his house. In such a case the guest has no alternative but to partake the food sent to him. He has been thereby saved from all sorts of inconveniences and discomforts as he was provided with the food at his own house.

The lowest category of a Feast

The third and lowest category of a feast consists in requesting the guest to call at your house to take the food. This is very inconvenient and expensive too. Nowadays people lead a busy life, live at long distances of thirty to forty miles. The acceptance of invitation to such a feast

means spending at least two hours and fifty rupees for attending the feast. This is no feast, but an attempt to cause inconvenience and financial loss to the guest. It could be more convenient to the guest if cash was presented to him or the food sent to him at his house.

A strange way of arranging a Feast

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Idris Kandehlawi رحمة الله عليه was one of my father's most intimate friends. He lived at Lahore. Once when he came to Karachi he also came to the Darul-Uloom Korangi, to see my respected father رحمة الله عليه. My father was highly pleased to see him. He visited the Darul-Uloom at about 10 (ten) a.m. When asked about his stay at Karachi, he said that he was staying at Agra colony and was due to go back to Lahore the next day. After having some conversation he was preparing to leave the Darul-Uloom. my father رحمة الله عليه expressed his wish to invite him to a feast in his honour. At the same time my father said to him that it would be very inconvenient and troublesome for him to visit the Darul-Uloom again from such a long distance for partaking of the feast, specially when he was leaving for Lahore the next day. In lieu of the feast my father رحمة الله عليه presented to the honourbale guest a 100-rupee note an humble gift. Maulana Muhammad Idris Sahib رحمة الله عليه placed that note on his head, saying: This is a great blessing from you that I have been honoured by your feast without undergoing any inconvenience and discomforts. He then took leave to depart.

Affection demands that ease and comfort should be provided

This is an example of avoiding undue formality and providing comfort. If there had been some person other

than the Mufti Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ he would have insisted on the guest to visit the host's house again for the feast. If there had been a guest other than Hazrat Maulana Idris Sahib رحمۃ اللہ علیہ he would have rejected the 100 rupee note, saying: Am I hungry and a beggar that you are offering me money to spend it on food?

Bear it in mind that the first demand of affection is that ease and comfort should be provided for the person loved, liked and invited instead of causing inconvenience and distress. My elder brother Zaki Kaifi رحمۃ اللہ علیہ used to compose very nice poetry. One of his beautiful couplets is as follows:

میرے محبوب میری ایسی وفا سے توبہ
جو تیرے دل کی کدورت کا سبب بن جائے

This means: O my beloved! I forsake such faith as may become a cause of displeasing your heart.

When my late brother recited this couplet I told him that thereby, he had dismissed all forms of '*Bid'ah*' (innovation). All innovations take rise from this tendency of a man that he invents from his own mind new ways of showing faith and loyalty. He hardly thinks that this way of showing loyalty only creates displeasure in the beloved's heart.

It is an art to invite a guest to a feast

Any way, it is an art to arrange a feast and invite guests to it. The aim should be to provide comfort and ease, instead of inconvenience and distress. Secondly, the main aim of arranging feasts is to express affection and to meet the demands of this affection. This has nothing to do with customs. For example, feast, are arranged on the occasions of *'Aqiqa*, or the third, tenth and fortieth days of

someone's death. Remember, that these formal feasts have nothing to do with the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Indeed a feast is that which is arranged with an open heart without any condition and customs, whatsoever.

The foregoing observations are about arranging a feast. As regards the matter of accepting the invitation to a feast, the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said, that it is the right of a Muslim to accept the invitation of the inviter. However, the meaning of accepting an invitation is that the man accepting the invitation should have love and affection for the inviter. An invitation should not be accepted for the reason that its non-acceptance will cause dishonour and disgrace to him in his family circle. Acceptance of an invitation with this idea is not in compliance with the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It will be in conformity with the *Sunnah* only when an invitation is accepted with a desire that the acceptance will pelase the heart of the inviter.

The condition to accept an invitation to a Feast

The *Shari'ah* has imposed a condition on accepting an invitation to a feast. This acceptance will become an act of *Sunnah* only when this does not involve the guest invited in some sin. It is not an act of *Sunnah* to accept an invitation where major sins are being committed as generally happens in the functions held nowadays. It is written on the marriage invitation cards وليمه مسنونه (a feast according to the *Sunnah*). The people know that it is an act of Sunnah to arrange a *Walimah* (mariage feast), but they do not know how to make this feast according to the *Sunnah*. In such feasts there is a violation of the purdah system. There are mixed gatherings of both the sexes and major sins are freely committed.

How long shall you go on surrendering yourself to this situation?

Why is all this happening ? It is happening, because we are passively surrendering ourselves to the vices. This has resulted in the spreading of the sins in the society e.g disobedience, indulgence in prohibited acts and lewdness, etc. If on the occasions of such feasts some members of the family had refused to attend the feasts and gatherings such vices would not have spread so fast. If the people are advised not to participate in a mixed gathering of males and females, they say in reply that by so doing they shall be expelled from the family and the soceity. It is suggested that it is much better that a man gets expelled from the clan and the society for the sake of saving himself from displeasing Allah. A man inviting should also abide by your principles and preferences. If he does not do this it is none of your respnsibility to accept his invitation.

The guests invited should take a strong stand in this matter and tell the members of their families and their relatives in clear cut words that they shall not attend a feast in a mixed gathering of men and women. They shall attend a feast where there is a separate arrangement for men and women. They will find that after sometime the vice will be stopped, as it has not yet gone beyond control. The difficulty is that religious-minded people feel ashamed to take this stand, that for the fear the people will dub them as conservative, backwards, fundamentalists and extremists. As against this, those who take the path of faithlessness and unbridled freedom, invite the people without any hitch and hesitation to shamelessness and lewdness. This vice has gone so far that young girls have begun to dance before men. Despite all this people are taking part in such marriage parties. Think a bit for God sake how long will you drift in

this flood and cooperate with the members of your family? If this trend continues for sometime more, it is not unlikely that the vices and curses of the western civilization will overpower our society. There must be a limit at which you must halt. It is, therefore, necessary that you should try to stop this flood of obscinity and absurdity. Therefore, resolve just now that you shall not participate in a function in which sins are committed and men and women sit and eat together. If you resist this ugly situation with courage and determination it is still possible to stop this flood of ever-increasing custom of shamelessness and lewdness.

The *Purdah* observing ladies become untouchable, in such mixed gatherings

On hearing these comments some hosts say that only a few *purdah* observing ladies attend these functions and separate arrangements can be made for them. Do you want to treat these ladies as utouchables? If a purdahless woman sits away from the men what does she lose? On the other hand, if a woman in *purdah* is compelled to appear without purdah before the male guests she spoils her religion. There is no difficulty in making separate arrangements for men and women. Only a little care and courage is needed to achieve this goal and eradicate the evil.

The injunction of the *Sharee'ah* to accept an invitation

The Islamic *Sharee'ah* enjoins that it is not lawful to attend a feast when it is known that some of the major sins will be committed there and there is a possibility that the person invited shall also be involved in these sins. It is, however, permissible to attend a feast in which there will be sin, but the guest will manage shoehow to keep himself

aloof from those sins. This permission is applicable to persons belonging to the general public and not to those important persons whom people raise their eyes for guidance. This is an important principle of accepting an invitation, that the guest does not beocme involved in a sin by his acceptance of the invitation to the feast.

To abandon an optional fast for the sake of a Feast

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also mentioned in the Hadith quoted in the beginning that if the guest who has been invited cannot partake of the food, because he is fasting he should pray for the host. The Jurists in the light of certain Ahadith, have gone to the extent that, if the man invited is observing an optional fast he has permission to break his fast and accept the invitation in order to please the host. He should compensate for that fast later on. If he does not feel inclined to break the fast, he should at least pray for the host.

An uninvited guest

عن ابی مسعود البدری رضی الله عنه، قال: دعا رجل النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم لطعام صنعه له خامس خمسة، فتبعهم رجل، فلما بلغ الباب قال النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم: ان هذا تبعنا فان شئت ان تأذن وان شئت رجع، قال: بل اذن له یا رسول الله (صحیح بخاری، کتاب الاطعمة، باب الرجل یدعی الی طعام فیقول: وهذا معی)

Hazrat Abu Masoodal-Badri رضی الله عنه has narrated that a man invited the Holy Prophet ﷺ to a feast along with four other persons with him ﷺ. Those were the days of simplicity, so when a man invited the Holy Prophet ﷺ he would permit him ﷺ to take with him three or four persons to share the feast. In the present case the host had invited five persons, including the Holy Prophet ﷺ. When

the Holy Prophet ﷺ was going to the feast a sixth person joined these five. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached the door of the host he ﷺ informed him that a sixth person had followed him who had not been invited. If the host permitted him he would enter the door, otherwise he would go back. The host gladly allowed the uninvited person to enter the house and partake of the food.

That man is a thief and a plunderer

In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught us that when we are going to attend a feast and by chance an uninvited person follows us to the house of the host, it is our duty to inform the host about this uninvited person. If the host allows this uninvited person, only then he can attend the feast. It occurs in a Hadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ that the person who attends a feast without invitation enters the feast as a thief and leaves it as a plunderer.

Some rights of the Host

This teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ points out a very important principle which we have forgotten. We have impressed upon our minds that a guest has many rights due to him by his host, e.g.,due respect, provision of comfort and nice food, etc. In this Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has taught that just as there are rights due to a guest by his host in the same way there are rights due to the host by the guest. If the right due to a host that the guest should not take with him uninvited persons to burden the host, as is the habit of certain *Pirs* and *Faqirs* who do not attend a feast unless there is a platoon of disciples and attendants to accompany them to the venue of the feast. At the sudden appearance of such a crowd the host gets nervous and upset. How to accommodate so

many unexpected arrivals? That is why the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that an uninvited person enters a feast as a thief and gets out of it as a plunderer. There is, however, an exception, when the guest and the host are on very intimate and friendly terms the guest may take a few common friends with him, feeling that the host will be pleased with this addition. In case the addition is likely to cause the slightest inconvenience to the host his prior permission must be obtained.

The Host must be informed in advance

Likewise, it is a right due to the host that his guest must give him advance information about his visit. The guest should visit the host, so as to allow him sufficient time to arrange for his food conveniently. If a guest visits his host at an odd hour it will be difficult for the latter to arrange for the lodging and fooding of the guest. This is a right of the host.

A guest should not observe fast without the permission of the host

May our lives be sacrificed for the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he ﷺ has mentioned in a Hadith that it is not lawful for a guest to observe fast without telling his host that he is fasting. This is becausae the host will arrange for the guest's breakfast and dinner etc., and he does not know that the guest is fasting. if the guest tells him at a late hour about his fasting all this labour of the host will be lost, along with the amounts spent on food, etc. By his behaviour the guest has also caused him mental torture. Therefore, the guest as well as the host have both their respective rights.

The Guest must be present at the meal time

The host appoints a time for serving the food but a guest is absent at this time and the host is searching for him. He himself cannot take food alone without his guest. The Islamic etiquettes demand that if a guest is not inclined to take food or will be late for the meal time, he must inform the guest of his intention and programme, so that the host may be saved from the inconvenience of searching and waiting.

It is a major sin to cause distress to a host

Deen (Faith) is not confined only to prayers, fasting and rehearsing the various sacred words. These rules of etiquette also form part of *Deen*, which in the Islamic terminology are called *Mu'ashrat* (social living). It is seen with regret that even great religious persons who are very particular in the matter of their routine prayers, do not care for these rules of '*Mu'ashrat*'. This carelessness involves them in sins. If, by ignoring these rules, you cause distress to your host, you incur the major sin of causing distress to a Muslim. You must be careful about it.

My respected father Maulana Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه used to say that to cause distress to a Muslim by one's words or acts is a major sin, like that of drinking wine, committing theft or adultery. Thus, if by any of his acts a guest causes distress to his host, he in fact causes distress to a Muslim and commits a major sin. All these points are included in the principle which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has very mercifully mentioned in the Hadith referred to earlier.

May Almighty Allah help us all in complying with these injunctions. *Aameen*!

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العالمين

Series 48

ISLAMIC *SHARA'EE* (LEGAL) PRINCIPLES ABOUT DRESS

DARUL ISHAAT URDU BAZAR KARACHI-1

Venue	:	Jame' Masjid Baitul-Mukarram Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi
Date	:	13th August, 1993.

ISLAMIC *SHARA'EE* (LEGAL) PRINCIPLES ABOUT DRESS

الحمد لله نحمده و نستعينه ونستغفره و نؤمن به و نتوكل عليه ونعوذ بالله من شرور انفسناومن سيأت اعمالنا من يهده الله فلا مضل له ومن يضلله فلا هادی له و نشهد ان لا اله الا الله وحده لاشريك له ونشهدان سيد نا و سندنا و نبينا ومولانا محمدا عبده ورسوله صلى الله تعالىٰ عليه وعلى اله واصحابه وبارك وسلم تسليما كثيرا كثيرا

اما بعد

فاعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم بسم الله الرحمٰن الرحيم

يٰبَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُّوَارِيْ سَوْاٰتِكُمْ وَرِيْشًا ط وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ط (الاعراف:٢٦)

امنت بالله صدق الله مولانا العظيم، وصدق رسوله النبى الكريم، ونحن على ذالك من الشاهدين والشاكرين. والحمد لله رب العالمين.

All praise is for Allah. We praise Him and seek His help and seek His forgiveness and believe in Him and rely on Him. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our souls and from the vices of our deeds. There is none to misguide him whom He guides and there is none to guide him whom He lets go astray. I bear witness that there is no god except Allah, the One and the only. He has no partner. I also bear witness that our sire, and our authority and our Prophet and our Master, Muhammad ﷺ is His servant and His Messenger. May Almighty Allah have mercy on him, his household and his Companions رضی الله عنهم and may He bless them and salute them all in a great deal.

That is: O children of Adam! We have revealed to you raiment to conceal your shame and (have also revealed) splendid vesture, but the raiment of righteousness, that is better. (7:26)

Introduction

As I have already mentioned the Islamic teachigns encompass within its orbit every branch of life. It is concerned with every part of social living and social activities without any exception. Dress is also an important aspect of human life. That is why it finds a detailed account in the Holy Qur'an and the *Sunnah*.

The present day propaganda

Nowadays a propaganda campaign is being launched that Dress is something which is related to the specific conditions of every nation and community. It is, therefore, a

matter of narrow-mindedness to involve the rules of the Sharee'ah therein and apply them in cases in which men prefer dresses in accordance with their choice and their environment. People are frequently heard saying that these Molvis have imposed conditions and restrictions on *Deen* which is something very easy and simple. Almighty Allah and His Prophet ﷺ did not prescribe these restrictions in *Deen*. These mullahs have imposed self-styled restrictions. Due to their short-sightedness they themselves have avoided many restrictions and are involving others.

Every type of dress has its specific impact

Bear in mind that the question of dress is not so simple, that a man may choose for him whatever style of dress he prefers without being affected in his *Deen*, his conduct and character, his life and his behaviour, by the dress he adopts. It is a fact admitted not only by the *Sharee'ah* but by the scientists as well as the Psychologists that the style of dress does have its impact on the behaviour, conduct and character of man. The dress is not only a few pieces of cloth sewn together. It is something which deeply affects the thinking, mentality and sentiments of man.

The effect of his gown on Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ عنہ

It has been narrated about Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ عنہ that once when he came to the Prophet's mosque to deliver a *Khutbah* (sermon) he was wearing a very magnificent gown. After having delivered the Khutbah when he went back home, he put off that gown with the resolution that he would not wear it again, because it created in him a sense of pride and superiority. The gown in itself was something

neither prohibited nor unlawful. Those who have been granted by Almighty Allah crystal-clear hearts are able to realize the slightest of vice in their inner selves. This may be illustrated by the example of a piece of cloth full of dirty spots. If one more spot is added to it, it will make no noticeable difference. The example of our hearts is like the example of the spotted cloth, full of countless spots of sins. We do not, therefore, at all realize in our hearts the bad effects of the sins we commit from time to time. Contrary to this, the hearts of the righteous are like spotless cloth. If a spot appears on it, it is clearly visible. The incident of Hazrat Umar رضی اللہ عنہ demonstrates that the dress-style of man does have an impact on his conduct, character and trend of thought. One should, therefore, realize the importance of dress and obey the injunctions of the *Sharee'ah* about it.

Another propaganda of the present day

Remember that the injunctions of *Deen* are applicable equally to the soul and the body, the inside as well as the outside. The Qur'an says:

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ (سورة الانعام: ١٢٠)

This means: Forsake the outwardness of the sin and the inwardness thereof. (6:120)

Almighty Allah has commanded His servants to give up the open as well as the hidden sins. Mind well that it is a deception of Satan to think that the inside of man is quite sound, notwithstanding the unsoundness of his outside. Remember that the outside becomes spoiled only when the inside is spoiled. The soundness of the outside depends on the soundness of the inside.

A beautiful example

One of our saints used to give an example to illustrate this point. When a fruit gets rotten in its inside the effect of this rottenness appears on its outside in the form of ugly spots. If the fruit is not rotten in its inside, the outside remains sound and sightly. Similarly, if the outside of a man is unsound, it is a sign that his inside is also unsound to a certain degree. It is therefore, not correct to claim that our inside is all right, no matter what is the condition of the outside.

Attention is paid to the betterment of the outside also in our worldly affairs

People take care to improve their inner as well as their outer appearance in the matters of their worldly affairs. It is a paradox to say that the btterment of the outside is not needed in the matter of "*Deen*". Take an example. While building a house, you have raised the structure with its covered walls and then the walls are plastered. The walls as well as its doors and windows and decorate them with paints to render its external apperance attractive. Now when the main structure which is the inside of the house is safe and sound what is the use of decorating and beautifying its exterior? In the matter of your house or your car you are not satisfied with the soundness of its inside but spend large amounts on decorating its outside. Why do you not apply the same principle in the matter of *Deen* about which you say that when its inside is safe and sound, there is nothing to worry about its outside condition.

This is a Satanic deception

The notion that it is not necessary to take care of the outside as long as the inside is all right is a Satanic

deception. It is necessary to ameliorate the inside as well as the outside. The outside requiring amelioration conists of your "Dress", food, conduct and character in the society. Their soundness has a bearing upon the soundness of the inside which is the soul. Those who do not think on these lines have really no real understanding of *Deen*. If matters had been as these ignorant persons presume, the Holy Prophet ﷺ would not have issued so many injunctions about dress, as he ﷺ has done. In principle he ﷺ has issued his kind injunctions in matters in which people are likely to go astray. It is, therefore, necessary to hear and obey these valuable principles and teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

The *Sharee'ah* has not specifically prescribed any dress

The Islamic *Sharee'ah* has been very moderate in the matter of dress-style. It has not prescribed any specific form and style to be adopted by all Muslims. It would be against Islam to disregard the prescribed pattern of dress. Being a *Deen* of nature, Islam does recognise that styles of dress worn by the people may differ from place to place, according to the conditions, climates, seasons, customs and the needs of different regions. Islam has, however, prescribed only some basic principles of dress which must be understood well and adhered to strictly.

Four basic principles of dress for Muslims

Mentioning the four basic principles of dress Almighty Allah has said in the Holy Qur'an:

يٰبَنِيْٓ اٰدَمَ قَدْ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكُمْ لِبَاسًا يُّوَارِيْ سَوْاٰتِكُمْ وَرِيْشًا ط وَلِبَاسُ التَّقْوٰى
ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ ط (الاعراف:٢٦)

This means: O children of Adam! We have

revealed to you raiment to conceal your shame and (have also revealed) splendid vesture, but the raiment of righteousness that is better. (7:26)

Almighty Allah has endowed these three sentences with a world of meanings.

The first basic principle of dress

The first basic principle as revealed in the verse is that the dress should conceal your hidden, private parts. The Arabic word سواة means that part of the body by showing or talking about which a man feels a sense of shame. (the concealable part) is meant here. Thus, the basic aim of dress is to conceal this سواة Allah has described some parts of men and women as سواة that which must be kept concealed from view. This concealable part in a man is what lies between the navel and the knees. It is not lawful to bare this part, except when it becomes unavoidable to bare it before a physician for medical treatment. As regards a woman her entire body is ستر (concealable), except the face and the hands up to the wrists. It is not lawful to open any part of this concealable part in a woman.

The basic aim of a dress is to cover the parts which the *Sharee'ah* has enjoined to be covered. A dress which does not meet this requirement is not recognized by the *Sharee'ah* as a dress. Indeed it is no dress at all.

Three defects in a dress

There are three aspects in which a dress does not fulfil the basic principle concerning "dress":-

i) It is so short that it leaves some of the concealable parts bared.

ii) The dress is large enough to cover two

concealable parts, yet it is so and thin that the concealed parts are reflected throught it.

iii) The dress tight-fitting that the depressions and projections of the body can be easily viewed. This also violates the rules of covering the ستر.

It is, therefore, necessary to cover the body with such thick cloth as does not reflect the concealed parts. It should not be of tight-fitting but of loose-fitting to conceal fully the internal parts. The same three principles are applicable to the female dress also.

The present naked garments

The fashion of the present age has totally defeated the aim of dress. Today such half-naked garments have been introduced among men and women as do not ensure which parts of the body are covered and which are visible to the eyes. Such funny garments are not recognized by the Islamic *Sharee'ah* as dress. There are women who wear very fine and tight-fitting garments which reveal the depressions and projections of their bodies to others. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said about such women :-

كا سيات عاريات (صحيح مسلم، كتاب اللباس، باب النساء الكاسيات)

Those women will be naked even in their garments. (Sahih Muslim)

By wearing such garments the basic aim will not be fulfilled for which Almighty Allah has revealed dress. This trend has spread among women of today like an epidemic and shame and modesty have lost their meaning. Garments and dresses have been designed by professional designers which instead of concealing help to reeal the body. We should for God's sake realize this and ban such garments at least in our houses, as they violate these

injuctions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

May Allah create, by His grace, this feeling among all of us. *Aameen.*

Women should conceal these limbs

Hardly a Friday passed on which our respected Dr. Abdul Hai Sahib رحمة الله عليه did not say something on this topic to draw our attention to the importance of the matter. He used to insist upon us to do some thing to stop this scourage which has become a common fashion. Women are attending public meetings and functions with their heads, arms, chests and bellies bare to view. The injunctions about concealing the body lay down that it is not lawful for a man to open his concealable parts before another man. Similarly, it is unlawful for a woman to open her concealable parts before another woman. For example a woman cannot appear before another woman with her chest, belly, arms, etc. bare, far less her appearing in this half-naked condition before men. These limbs are among her concealable parts.

Harmful results of sins

Just attend a marriage party of these days and see for yourself what is happening there. In these functions women appear before men in half-naked dresses without any hitch, hesitation or shame. This is only a way of inviting Allah's curse and wrath by flagrantly flouting the commands of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. The disturbances, murders, thefts and dacoities we see around us every day are due to these sins and acts of disobedience. The Holy Qur'an has said:

وَمَآ اَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَ يَعْفُوْا عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ

(سوره الشورى: ٣٠)

Whatever misfortune befalls you, it is due to

what your (own) hands have earned. And He forgives much. (42: 30)

We, therefore, appeal to you earnestly to banish this scourage and sin at least from your houses.

The state of women during the age near the Day of Judgment

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has drawn in a Hadith such a vivid picture of the contemporary societies that we would have been at a loss to understand its meaning, if we had not seen the conditions with our own eyes. In those olden days it was not possible to visualise these conditions. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: During the age near the Day of Judgment women will be naked, even though they will be putting on garments. The hair on their heads will be like camel humps. The modern fashion of our age has corroborated the predictions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It seems as though he ﷺ made this prediction after seeing these women. (Sahih Muslim).

Next he ﷺ said:

مميلات مائلات

Those women will attract others towards them by their gait, decorations, make-up.

They will come riding on thrones and get down at the doors of the mosques. The commentators of Ahadith were at a loss to interpret this Hadith. The conditiosn obtaining in our times have clarified the meaning of this Hadith that women will move about sitting on cars. The situations we are facing today are due to an open rebellion by the people against the injunctions of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Those who are committing sins openly

It should be noted that there are two kinds of sins. In the first kind of sin man commits a sin secretly and not openly. Sometimes he feels ashamed at his sins and repents for them. In the second category man commits sins openly above board and with pride. This is a very dangerous matter. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in a Hadith:

كل امتى معافى الا المجاهرين(صحيح بخارى، كتاب الادب، باب سترا المومنين على نفسه حديث نمبر ٦٠٦٩)

It is hoped that all the sinners in my *Ummah* shall be forgiven by the grace of Allah, either by repentance or by Allah's own mercy.

There are those who commit sins openly, feel proud of their sins and more than that regard their sins as good deeds. They are ready to defend themselves by arguments. They want to go with the age and do not want to displease the society. There is no hope, God-forbid, of forgiveness for such hardened sinners.

Relinqish the society

Just consider! Is it not a very good bargain that by relinquishing your society, you straighten your relations with Allah? How long will this society cooperate with you and for what? Note that after entering the grave there will be no companion except the good deeds you sent before hand from your life in the world. Your society will leave you alone at the grave. It will not come to your rescue in the grave. At such a critical juncture there will be none except your deeds to save you from the troment of Allah. About the horrors of that time Allah has said:

مَالَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ (البقره: ١٠٧)

This means: .... and you have not, beside

Allah, any friend or helper. (2:107)

In other words on that hectic day there will be none to save you except Almighty Allah.

An event that is full of morals

In surah 37-Saffat of the Holy Qur'an there is an event relating to a person whom Allah will, by His mercy admit into Paradise and bestow upon him all the blessings of Paradise. At such an auspicious time he will remember a friend of him who used to incite him in the world to sins and bad deeds. He used to delude him by describing the conditions and demands of the society. This inmate of Paradise desired to see and find out the fate of his ill-advised friend. He, therefore, began to peep into the Hell to search for the latter. The Holy Qur'an says:

فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَاٰهُ فِیْ سَوَاءِ الْجَحِیْمِ○قَالَ تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كِدْتَّ لَتُرْدِیْنِ○وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّیْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِیْنَ(الصافات: ۵۵ تا ۵۷)

These verses mean:

Then he looked down and saw him in the depth of the Hell. He said: By Allah you had indeed almost ruined me. and had it not been for the favour of my Lord I too would have been among those brought forth (to doom). (37: 55-57).

Anyway, the affairs of this society appear to be very pleasant and attractive to those who have no *Eeman* (Faith) but those who have *Eeman* in Allah, the Last Day and the Day of Judgment should not be beguiled by the charms of the society. If you firmly beleive that one day you have to appear before your creater Allah, and render your accounts to Him, then you must turn to the commands of Allah and His Prophet ﷺ and put up, with a smiling face, with the taunts and jeerings of this society. Do not mind at all if the society dubs you as backward,

outmoded and an extremists. So, take up courage and tell this society frankly that you are as the society describes you, yet you do not care at all for this errant and bewildered society and that under no circumstances you are prepared to take the path to Hell.

These taunts are a blessing for the Muslims

The Prophets of Allah عليهم السلام had also been subjected by the infidels to taunts. A man who wants to take the path of *Deen* has to tolerate these taunts. However, rememebr that you cannot succeed unless you declare these taunts to be a matter of pride for yourself. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in a narrative:

اكثروا ذكر الله حتى يقولوا "مجنون" (مسند احمد ج٣ ص٦٨)

Indulge in Allah's remembrance so intensely that the people may take for a madman.

Do not follow the society blindly, but take the opposite direction and try to change the direction of the society's current. It is seen that people dub him as a madman who is honest and trustworthy in his work. They say that the man is crazy. Thus, those who refrain from taking or giving bribe, avoid interest-bearing transactions' and unlawful acts and obey the injunctions of Allah in the matter of dress deserve these taunting remarks. Note that such degrading titles from the society are glad tidings for you from the Holy Prophet ﷺ and a cause of pride too. This is the title which he ﷺ has himself conferred on you. You should, therefore, offer two *Rak'ats* of thanksgiving prayers to Allah and express joy on the day these titles are directed to you. Allah has in this way elevated you on this day to the high position which his Prophet ﷺ has appointed for a *Mu'min* (believer). So, there is nothing to

fear and worry about. How nicely Maulana Zafar Ali Khan رحمة الله عليه has expressed this idea in a couplet:

> توحید تو یہ ہے کہ خدا حشر میں کہہ دے
> یہ بندہ دو عالم سے خفا میرے لئے ہے
>
> *Tauheed* (Monotheism) is that on the Day Ressurrection Allah Himself declares. Look! This servant was angry with the two worlds for "My sake!"

If by turning your eyes from the entire world you establish firmly your relations with Allah it is not a bad and cheap bargain. This worldly life is too shortlived. The day you pass away from this transitory life to the everlasting life of the next world, you shall be given a warm reception. You shall see that on the Day of Judgment those who used to taunt and jeer at you in the world are weeping. How long will you go on cooperating with, and surrendering yourself to this society? How long will you follow it blindly? Just take courage and resolute firmly to eradicate nakedness and nudity from the society. May Allah help us all in this matter. *Aameen*!

Allah has mentioned the first principle concerning dress which is to conceal ستر (concealable parts of the body). A dress that does not meet this requirement is no dress; it is a form of nudity.

The second principle concerning dress

Almighty Allah has mentioned the second principle of dress by using the word ریشا (vesture), a sort of decoration and decency for you. A man's beauty lies in his dress. A dress should, therefore, be well designed and sewn so that the man wearing it should feel ease and happiness. It should not be ill-designed nor ill-fitting to

disgust the people. It should be decent and attractive in some degree.

To wear costly dresses to pleasae one's heart

Sometimes a man finds himself in a state of doubt about the dress he should put on. If he wears a costly dress it may be prodigality. If he chooses an ordinary dress, how ordinary should it be ? The learned saint Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has advised us about a dress that it should fully cover the ستر (concealable parts) and should at the same time provide some comfort to the body. There is no harm in wearing such dress. For example it is quite lawful to put on a dress made of thin cloth for the sake of comfort. In the same way a man purchasaes a garment at the rate of Rs 15/- per yard instead of Rs 10/- per yard, because the cost is within his means and he thinks that in addition to being comfortable it also pleases his heart. This comes neither within the definition of prodigality nor is it a sin. It is quite lawful to wear such dress.

A rich man should wear a decent dress

It is not good for a wealthy man to wear a very lowly and third-grade dress. It occurs in a Hadith that a man called on the Holy Prophet ﷺ who was in a very shabby wornout and unsightly dress. He ﷺ asked him, saying:

الك مال؟ قال نعم، قال: من اى المال؟ قال قد اتانى الله من الابل والغنم والخيل والرقيق، قال: فاذا اتاك الله مالا فلير اثر نعمة الله عليك وكرامته

(ابو داؤد "كتاب اللباس" باب غسل الثواب، حديث نمبر ٤٠٦٣)

Have you got some property ? He replied: Yes. The Holy Prophet ﷺ asked him : What kind of property is it? He replied: Allah has granted me all sorts of properties out of camels, goats, horses and slaves. The Holy Prophet ﷺ

said: When Allah has granted you property, the effect of this grant should appear from your dress also.

In other words, it should not happen that a man enjoying Allah's gifts should appear as a pauper and beggar. In a way, it is showing ingratitude towards the favours of Allah. Thus, it is no sin, but quite lawful to purchase a dress out of Allah's grant which should provide comfort and pelase the heart of the person wearing it.

Sometimes the Holy Prophet ﷺ has worn costly dresses

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is generally called by the common people "the Prophet ﷺ with the black blanket" and the poets have in their poems given great publicity to this attribute. It is quite true that he ﷺ for the most part of his sacred life preferred simple living. It is narrated about him ﷺ that he ﷺ used to put on generally garments of coarse cloth and wore thick sheets. Likewise, it is also narrated about him ﷺ that once he ﷺ put on a gown which valued about two thousand Dinars. As every act of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was going to become a *Sunnah* and a part of the *Sharee'ah* for the *Ummah* his advice for weaker people like us is that it is quite lawful to put on costly dress for one's comfort and for the expression of decency. One is quite free to do so.

Ostentation and show are not lawful

It may be the intention by acquiring and putting on a costly dress to display to the people that the man is putting on such a costly dress and he is a very rich man and is superior to others. He may do this to impose his greatness and superiority on others. All these trends come within the definition of "ostentation and show" and are totally

forbidden and are unlawful.

A Sheikh (spiritual guide) is needed

There is a very imperceptible difference between the two points, viz., whether costly dress has been put on to pelase one's own heart or to make a show of superiority to others. Who should decide on this very fine difference. It is not everybody's job. A reformer and guide is needed here. He will tell whether the costly dress has been put on really to please one's heart or it is a deception of Satan. It is the spiritual guide (*Pir*) who will guide correctly on such occasions of doubts and suspicions. This point is involved not only in the matter of dress but in all other personal matters, like food, shoes, houses, etc. Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه has given us a golden formula to find out the difference.

Refrain from prodigality and pride

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned a very fine principle in this behalf in the following Hadith:

كل ماشئت والبس ماشئت ما اخطئتك اثنتان: سرف ومخيلة

(صحیح بخاری، کتاب اللباس، باب نمبر ١)

This means: Eat and wear whatever you like but refrain from two acts: prodigality and pride.

In other words, the intention is to say that prodigality comes in the picture when a man dresses himself with the intention of making a show of his dress. So, one should refrain from putting on a garment that creates pride. However, a spiritual guide is needed to say which dress leads to prodigality and which to pride.

We are discussing the second principle of dress which is decency and decoration. Decency and decoration have their limits. Remaining within these limits decorate yourself as you like. Keeping that decency and decoration

beyond the prescribed limits are unlawful (*Haram*).

Do not run after fashion

People have formed a strange habit of going after the fasion of the day, irrespective of that the garment in fashions suits or does not suit their own choice and convenience. The criterion before them is to accept what is in fahsion and discard what goes out of fashion. For example, once long and flowing shirts had become a fashion with the result that not only did everyone wear it but also began to praise its many qualities. When shorter shirts came into fashion, it displaced the longer shirts and people accepted it as something unique, forgetting their fancy for the longer shirts previously in fahsion. It is not right to decide upon the suitability or unsuitability of something on the basis of fashion. Subject to the permission of the *Sharee'ah* you are free to wear whatever pleases you and suits your fancy and convenience.

Eat and wear whatever you like

There is a popular saying in Hindi :

It means that you should eat what you like, but wear what the world (the general public) likes.

The Islamic *Sharee'ah* does not recognize this principle. Instead, it enjoins upon you to eat what you like and wear what you like. The Islamic *Sharee'ah* has allowed you to eat and wear what you like, keeping within the limits prescribed by the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is not at all lawful to wear a dress which has become a fashion and which is intended to be shown to others. It is totally forbidden (*Haram*).

Women and love of fashion

The mentality of our women is particularly in need of reform and guidance. They think that the garment is not for them, but it is for others to see and appreciate, so that they may declare it to be in accordance with the latest fashion and realize that the woman wearing it belongs to a rich family. As a result in their own houses they are generally seen ill-dressed before their near and dear ones and their husbands. However, when they have to go out to attend a function, they take every care to ensure that the dress should be attractive and according to the ruling fashion and design and that the people may believe that they are ladies of the privileged class. For each function they have a different suit of clothes. They will not wear in another function the suit which they have worn in an earlier. The love of show and display and not thier own choice or preference is the root-cause. This spree of exhibtion is unlawful and a sin. there is no sin if a woman changes her suits from day to day not for show but to please her ego.

Hazrat Iman Malik رحمة الله عليه and a new suit of clothes

Some of our own saints are known to be fond of fine dresses. Hazrat Imam Malik رحمة الله عليه is one of them. He lived at Madinah Munawwarah and was known as the Imam of Darul-Hijrah. It is related about him that he used to put on a new suit every day. This means that every year three hudnred and sixty suits were prepared for him, as after having put on a suit once he did not wear again. Someone objected to this, saying that it was prodigality on his part. The Imam رحمة الله عليه replied to this objection as follows:

I am unable to avoid this. At the commencement of

every year a friend of mine brings me three hundred and sixty suits, requesting me that I should put on a new suit every day. If I do not accept his gift, this will displease him, and if I do not put on a suit every day this will be defeating the purpose of the gift. So I change my clothes every day and hand over the cast off suit to a poor man. Thus, many poor men receive benefit from this practice."

Anyway, this act of Hazrat Imam Malik رحمة الله عليه was to please his own heart and the heart of the donor and not to show and display his richness and finery.

An event of Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه

It is an event full of morals which I heard from my respected father رحمة الله عليه, Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه had two wives, one being senior and the other junior. The senior wife being an old-timer wanted to serve and please her husband to the best of her ability. The Eid festival was near at hand. She thought of presenting the Maulana a gown made of fine cloth as an Eid gift. She got from the market a piece of costly cloth of bright colour and began to sew the gown. She did not inform the Maulana beforehand with the idea that it would be more pelasing to present the gift as an Eid surprise. After hard labour when the gown was ready, it was sent to the Maulana on the night before Eid, she advised him to proceed to the prayer-ground with that gown on his person. The gown, made of a piece of bright colour, was far from being to the liking of the Maulana رحمة الله عليه. The Maulana was indeed in a fix. What to do? He wanted to please his wife who had put in so much toil during the whole of Ramazan in the preparation of that gown. He, therefore, put on that gown and conducted the Eid prayer with the gown on his body. At the end of the prayer a man came to the Maulana and told him that the gown did not suit

him. The Maulana accepted is remark then putting off the gown gifted it to that man.

To please the hearts of others

Hazrat Thanawi رحمة الله عليه related this event to my father Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahib رحمة الله عليه and told him tht while going to the prayer-ground in that gown his heart was undergoing great torture, as he had never in his life worn garments of bright colours. I took upon myself this torture and some tautns too, only to please the heart of my wife who had taken so much pains in preparing that gown with her own hands.

There is no sin if a man puts on best dresses to please his own heart and the hearts of his near and dear ones in the family including the heart of the donor of a gift. It is, however, a cause of punishment and totally forbidden to put on costly dresses with the intention of show and display of his richness and superiority to the people.

The third principle concerning dress

The third principle mentioned by the Islamic *Sharee'ah* concerning dress is that it should not resemble the dresses of other nations and communities. This practice has been called in the *Sharee'ah* تشبه (imitation). It is a great sin to put on a dress with the intention of imitating the member of another nation, irrespective of that the dress put on is good on bad, likeable or unlikeable. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has expressed in a Hadith a great warning on those who put on a dress for the only purpose of imitating some other community:

من تشبه بقوم فهو منهم (ابو داؤد، كتاب اللباس، باب فى لبس الشهره. حديث نمبر ٤٠٣١)

It means that a man who puts on the dress of

another community with the express intention of mimicking that community is one of them, as if he is not from among the Muslim community. (chap: Garments, Abu Dawood).

This act of imitating another community in dress etc. is an indirect way of expressing love for it. Such a man will be raised up in the Hereafter with the community he imitated. How terrible ! May Allah save us all from this! *Aameen.*

The reality of تشبہ (Imitation)

It should be understood well when this (Imitaion) comes into play and when it is forbidden. Firstly imitation is forbidden (*Haram*) in an act which is in itself a vice and against the principles of the *Sharee'ah*. Secondly, the act in itself is not unlawful, but it is permissible. A man is, however, doing that act with the intention of imitating the member of that alien community and to appear as one of them. In a situation like this even permissible act becomes unlawful.

To put a *Zunnar* round the neck

The Hindus wear a *Zunnar* (a sacred thread) round their necks. If a Muslim also wears a *Zunar* only by chance, it is not unlawful but it is only permissible for him. If he wears a *zunnar* with the intention of imitating a Hindu, it becomes unlawful and forbidden (*Haram*), as it comes within the meaning of تشبہ (imitation)

To put on mark made by Hindus on the forehead

Hindu women put on a red mark on their foreheads. If the Hindu women did not do this and a Muslim women puts

this mark on her forehead as a mark of decoration this practice is in itself permissible, it is neither unlawful nor forbidden. On the other hand if a Msulim woman puts on her forehead a red mark only to mimic the practice of the Hindus and to resemble them, this becomes unlawful and forbidden. We are given to understand that this fashion of putting on *Qashqah* (Mark) has started in Pakistan also. If so, our women are doing so to imitate the Hindu women. This is unlawful. If an act is in itself lawful and permissible, but it is done to mimic a non-Muslim community it comes within the definition of تشبہ (imitation) and becomes unlawful and forbidden.

It is not lawful to imitate other nations

On the basis of this principle it can be said that it is unlawful and prohibited to adopt and imitate the dress of a nation which has beocme the specific mark and a distinction of that nation by which it is recognized and distinguished from other nations. For example, nowadays it has become a common fashion among men to wear trousers and jackets. Some aspects of this dress are unlawful, irrespective of that this dress may or may not involve (imitation). One defect in it is that it is worn below the ankles. No dress which covers the ankles is lawful for men. Another drawback is that if the trousers are of tight-fittings it does not provide the ستر (cover) which is the basic purpose of a dress, because the depressions and projections of the body are quite visible. For these two drawbacks. it is not lawful to put on trousers and jackets. However, if anyone takes care that the trousers reach up to the ankles and are loose enough not to show the contours of the body, then in itself it is permissibel to put on this dress.

To wear Trousers

If anyone puts on trousers to imitate the English and to become like them, then it is unlawful to adopt this dress, because it comes within the definition of تشبہ (imitation). If imitation is not intended and care is also taken to see that it does not cover the ankles and is also loose enough, then in such a situation it has not been declared borbidden to wear it. Even so, it is not good to wear it, as it is not free from being disgustful. Why is it so? Try to understand this point carefully.

The difference between تشبہ (imitation) and مشابہت (resemblance)

These are two different acts quite distinct from each other. تشبہ (imitation) means that a man intentionally tries to imitate some other community to become like them. This is entirely forbidden. As for مشابہت (resemblance) the act of resemblance is not deliberate but it takes place spontaneously. This is not forbidden. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has however, advised against (resemblance) when it is not at all necessary. He ﷺ has advised his *Ummah* to keep themselves distinguished from the other nations, as far as possible. There should be a distinctive mark of the Muslim nation so that there may be no doubt in recognizing a Muslim from a non-Muslim. It is not permissible to change one's identity so that it may become difficult to recognize whether the person is a Muslim or a non-Muslim and whether to bid him the Islamic (salute) or not.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ took care to refrian from مشابہت (resemblance)

It is a matter of great virtue to fast on the ʿAshoorah Day (the 10th of the month of Muharram). When the Holy

Prophet ﷺ migrated to Madinah Munawwarah, in the beginning fasting on the ʿAshoorah Day was obligatory. By that time the Ramazan fasting had not been prescribed as an obligatory duty. When the Ramazan fasting was made obligatory, the obligatory nature of ʿAshoorah fasting was cancelled. After this cancellation it became optional and permisisble only. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came to know that the Jews also fasted on the ʿAshoorah Day, he ﷺ said that if he ﷺ remained alive, the next year he would add another day to ʿAshoorah for fasting, i.e. he ﷺ would fast also either on the ninth or the eleventh day of Muharram, so as to fast two days to avoid imitation of the Jews. (Musnad Ahamd vol. 1, P. 236)

See how the Holy Prohet ﷺ did not like the (resemblance) with the Jews even in a worship like fasting. That is why he ﷺ asked his *Ummah* to add to the ʿAshoorah either the nineth or the eleventh day of Muharram to make the fasting days two instead of one to avoide resemblance with the Jews. Thus, تشبہ (imitation) is quite unlawful, but (resemblance) too is not desirbale. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised us to avoid it as far as possible.

Oppose the *Mushrikeen* (polytheists)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said in a Hadith:

خالفوا المشركين (صحيح بخارى، كتاب اللباس، باب تقليم الاظفار، حديث نمبر ۵۸۹۲)

Oppose the polytheists in all matters as far as possible and create for you your own modes of life as distinguished from those of the *Mushrikeen*.

He ﷺ has said in another Hadith:-

فرق ما بينا وبين المشركين العمائم على القلانس (ابو داؤد كتاب اللباس، باب فى االعمام، حديث نمبر ۴۰۷۸)

> That is our putting on caps under our turbans makes us distinguished from the polytheists, because they do not wear caps under their turbans.

That is why we have been asked to put on caps under our turbans in opposing the polytheists. It is not an unlawful act to put on turbans without caps, but the advice to put on caps is only to avoid resemblance to the polytheists. It is not desirable to make ourselves resemble other non-Muslim communities. It is better to refrain from this act as far as possible. The Noble Companions رضی اللہ عنہم took great care not to resemble the non-Muslim communities.

The Muslims are a distinguished nation

You should know that Almighty Allah has created you as a separate nation and included you in His Own Party under the name of حزب اللہ (Allah's party). You stand in isolation quite distinct from the entire world. The Holy Qur'an has said that basically there are only two groups in the entire world:

خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَّمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ (سورہ التغابن: ۲)

> Allah has created you in two groups, one of you being disbelievers and the other being believers. (64:2)

The group of the believers should, therefore, never mix up with that of the disbeleivers. The beleivers should stand distinguished from the disbelievers, by their dress, their behaviour and life in general. Everything concerning the believers should have an Islamic stamp on it. This purpose is defeated if the Muslims adopt the ways of other commnities.

Just see for yourself how everyone, Muslim or non-Muslim, is putting on the same dress. If you go to an assembly of men it will be very difficult for you to know

either from their dress or from their behaviour and conduct who is a Muslim and who is a non-Muslim It is difficult to decide whether to bid them the Islamic Salam or not, and on what topic one should talk to them. To forestall these vices the Holy Prophet ﷺ has advised us to avoid تشبه (imitation), because it is totally un- lawful and also مشابهت (resemblance) which is neither likeable nor desirable.

It is shamelessness

How shameless it is that you should wear the dress of a nation that enslaved you for long, tyrannized, you in different ways, conspired against you and killed you in great numbers. It left no limit in torturing and disgracing you. How shameless it is indeed that you are adopting the dress and ways of such a tyrant nation?

The narrow-mindedness of the English

People say that it is narrow-mindedness to stop them from using the dress of the disbeleiving English people. Do you not know or have you forgotten the narrow-mindedness of this English community when they occupied India ? They made the flowing gowns, Shalwars and turbans of the Mughal, a uniform for their menial servants, like gate-keepers, peons, butlers and waiters. Why did they do so ? They did so only to disgrace the Muslims and to show them that they attired their low-grade servants in the dress of the Muslim Kings. As against all this the broad-mindedness of we Muslims is that we are putting on the dress of these tyrants with great gusto and pride. What a shame! If anyone tells them that it is against honour and self-respect to put on such dress they retort by saying: "This is narrow-mindedness".

خرد کا نام جنوں رکھ دیا جنوں کا خرد
جو چاہے آپ کا حسن کرشمہ ساز کرے

On account of the miraculous beauty of the beloved madness has been named wisdom and wisdom madness.

In this attitude lies the worst kind of shamelessness, in addition to the fact that it is undesirable in the light of the *Shareeʿah*.

May you change all your ways, yet...... !

Note it very carefully that, however, much you may change your ways by wearing their dress and adopting their life-style, yet you cannot find for you any respect in their eyes. The Holy Qur'an has clearly stated:

وَلَنْ تَرْضٰى عَنْكَ الْيَهُوْدُ وَلَا النَّصٰرٰى حَتّٰى تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ

(سورة البقرة: ١٢٠)

And the Jews will not be pleased with you, nor will the Christians, till you follow their creed. (2:120)

The Jews and Christians will not be pleased with you, however, much you may adopt their dress and take to their life-style, unless you accept their creed. You have changed yourselves from head to foot on the pattern of their living, yet they have always hated you and tried to ruin you. You have seen this attitude on their part and are seeing it now more vividly. They will never accord you any honour and resepct for your putting on their dress.

Dr Iqbal's comments on the Western civilization

Late Dr. Iqbal has sometimes said very sensible and wise things in his poetry. While commenting on the Western dress and life-style he has said:

قوت مغرب نہ از چنگ و رباب
نے ز رقص دختران بے حجاب

نے ز سحر ساحران لالہ روس
نے ز عریاں ساق، نے از قطع موش

Dr. Iqbal elaborates further:

قوت افرنگ از علم و فن است
از ہمیں آتش چراغش روشن است

The idea expressed in these couplets may be summarised as follows:

The power of the west does not lie in music, nor in the dance of their unveiled daughters, nor in the atraction of the tulip-faced beauties nor in the naked legs and short hair-locks on their heads.

Iqbal goes on to say further:

The secret of the power and supremacy of the west lie in their hard work in the field of art and science. Their advancement, progress and superiority all are due to their devoted research and experiment.

In the end he has said:

حکمت از قطع و برید جامہ نیست
مانع علم و ہنر عمامہ نیست

Wisdom, art and science do not depend on any particular style of dress. The eastern dress consisting of the gown and the turban too is not the cause of backwardness. It is nothing but hard work in the field of knowledge and science is needed.

You did not acquire from the west what would have really helped you viz. knowledge and technology, but you

relied on imitating their dress, life-style. In this way you disgraced yourself. The world honours and respects those who have regard and love for their own way of life. So the world shall accord no credit to you for this habit of mimicking others.

Refrain from تشبہ (imitation) and مشابہت (resemblance) both

I have already mentioned the injunction of the *Sharee'ah* that تشبہ (imitation) is unlawful and a sin, because it is practised deliberately. As regards مشابہت (resemblance), if this intention is not involved, but some similarity occurs spontaneously without intention and attempt. It is neither a sin nor unlawful, yet it is not free from disgust and repulsion. However, it is totally against honour and self-respect. Therefore, it is necessary to avoid both as far as possible.

The fourth principle regarding dress

It is unlawful to put on a dress by which a feeling of pride and superiority is born, even if that dress may have been prepared from jute-cloth. For example, a man wears such rough and coarse dress with the intention that such a dress will make him look in the sight of the people like a great saint and Sufi, then this may create a sense of greatness and superiority and lead him to look down upon others. In this condition that jute-cloth dress also becomes a cuase of pride and arrogance and is, therefore, unlawful. Hazrat Sufyan Sauri رحمۃ اللہ علیہ has said that pride is not created by a dress; it is born by looking down upon others. Sometimes a man thinks that he is putting on an humble and ordinary dress, yet his heart is full of pride.

It is not lawful to cover the ankles

Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Almighty Allah will not look at a man with an eye of mercy on the Day of Judgment who drags down his garment on the ground with pride. (Sahih Bukhari....Hadith No: 5791)

In another Hadith the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that the portion of a man's lower garment (trousers, etc) which covers and goes below the ankles will enter Hell.

This shows that it is not lawful for men to wear a dress (trousers, sheet, etc) which covers and goes down the ankles. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned two warnings for this. Firstly, the portion of the dress that covers and reaches beyond the ankles will be in Hell. Secondly, on the Day of Judgment Allah will not cast a glance of mercy on this sinner. Now see that it is a very simple matter to let your lower garment remain above the ankles. What harm is there if one wears his trousers, etc. so as to remain an inch or so above the ankles? On the other hand, you will save yourself from the displeasure of Allah and attract His glance of mercy. This is a tasteless sin in which the entire nation is involved and none cares about it.

It is a sign of pride to cover the ankles

The Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent to the world with his mission as a Prophet during the Days of ignorance. In those days it was a common fashion to cover the ankles and let the lower dress reach beyond them. It was even considered better if the dress dragged on the ground while walking. A book of Arbaic peotry (Hamasah) حماسہ is taught in the Arabic schools to students of the famous *Dars-e-Nizami* course. It contains poetry composed during

the Days of ignorance. In this book a poet expresses his thoughts with pride:

اذا ما اصطبحت اربعا خط میزری

When after drinking four glasses of wine I
go out in the morning, my lower dress gets
dragged along, drawing lines on the ground.

Now see how this poet has described this action of his as a proud performance. When the Holy Prophet ﷺ came with his mission, he abolished this custom as he abolished many other customs of the Days of ignorance. He ﷺ commanded that the lower dress should be worn above the ankles as it gives rise to pride and feelings of superiority to let down the dress to cover the ankles.

This also refutes the propaganda which is being spread widely nowadays that the Holy Prophet ﷺ adopted many of the customs, dresses and styles which were common among the Quraish. What is the harm, they ask, if they adopt some of the modes and customs which are in vogue in our times?

Bear in mind that the Holy Prophet ﷺ never adopted the modes and styles which were common during his days. On the other hand, he ﷺ declared them to be unlawful and amended them to conform to the Islamic ways. Not only are the people nowadays committing this sin but they raise objection and ask what is the harm in it. They should know that the harm lies in the fact that this practice invites Allah's wrath and shall take the sinner to Hell.

At the bidding of the English man they have bared their knees too

A saintly person late Hazrat Maulana Ihtishamul Haq Thanawi رحمة الله عليه once said in a lecture that when the Holy Prophet ﷺ has asked us to keep the ankles open as it is not

lawful to conceal them, we are not prepared to obey the Prophet ﷺ in this matter. On the other hand, when the English asked us to open the knees we at once obeyd them by putting on knickers. How shameless it is! If we have any love for the Holy Prophet ﷺ, that love has a claim on us. How is it possible for a Muslim to appreciate something which the Holy Propeht ﷺ has disapproved?

An event relating to Hazrat Usman Ghani رضی اللہ عنہ

On the occasion of the treaty of Hudaibiah Hazrat Usman Ghani رضی اللہ عنہ was going to Makkah to negotiate terms with the disbelievers. His cousin who was accompanying him pointed out to him that his trousers were above the ankles and the dignitaries of Makkah with whom you are going to negotiate look down upon a man whose trousers remain above the ankles. He, therefore, advised Hazrat Usman Ghani to cover his ankles by lowering his trousers. Hazrat Usman Ghani رضی اللہ عنہ replied:

لا، هكذا ازرة صاحبنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

"I cannot do this as the trousers of my master were like this I have nothing to worry about what these infidels think of me. I must follow the ways of the Holy Prophet ﷺ".

These are our ancestors who compelled the world to bow before them, while we are afraid of the world and are feeling ashamed to follow the ways of Islam and the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. We are simply hankering after fashion. Kindly for God's sake reform your ways and inculcate in your heart an enthusiasm to act upon the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ.

Is it permissible to cover the ankles, if there is no involvement of pride?

Some people think that the Holy Prophet ﷺ had commanded not to cover the ankles to forestall pride and arrogance. There should be no harm in covering the ankles, if no pride is invovled. They support their claim with the Hadith regarding Hazrat Abu Bakr رضی الله عنه.

Once Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq رضی الله عنه complained to the Holy Prophet ﷺ that his trousers frequently slipped down the ankles. What should he do ? The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied: The slipping down of your trousers is not due to pride but it is due to disability. You are, therefore, not among them. (Abu Dawood..... Hadith No: 4085).

On the basis of this Hadith people say that they too do not lower their trousers on account of pride, so this should be lawful for them. Now who is going to decide whether you are covering the ankles with or without pride? Just think who can be more away from pride than the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and yet he never covered his ankles at any time in his lifetime?

The permission given to Hazrat Siddiq Akbar رضی الله عنه was due to some disability in his body in the presence of which trousers slipped down his ankles oft and on. Is there any disability with you also? As regards the question of pride, no proud person ever thinks that he is proud. The Islamic *Sharee'ah* has issued its injunctions in the light of the indications and symptoms. In this particular case the injunction does not say that if there is pride keep the trousers above the ankles, otherwise keep them down. Despite the command of the Holy Prophet ﷺ to keep the trousers above the ankles, you are lowering them down. This means that you are doing so on account of pride. This practice is unlawful in all circumstances.

The correct decision of the Research Scholars

There are learned men who have said that if the trousers are lowered to cover the ankles on account of pride, the act is unlawful. If it is not due to pride then the act is repulsive and abominable. Research Scholars, however, agree that lower the trousers to cover the ankles is unlawful in all circumstances. It is not an easy job to find out the presence of pride in each and every case. The only way to save oneself from this sin is to keep the trousers above the ankles and eradicate pride from its very roots.

May Allah help us, by His mercy, to act upon these injunction. Aameen.

Anyway, these are the four principles of "Dress":

(i) It should cover the entire coverable parts of the body

(ii) It should be a means of decorating the body, within the limits of the *Sharee'ah*.

(iii) It should not resemble the dress of a non-Muslim.

(iv) It should not indicate pride and arrogance.

Now we mention below a few Ahadith of the Holy Prophet ﷺ about "Dress" in general.

White Dresses are desirable

عن ابن عباس رضی الله تعالی عنهما عن النبی صلی الله علیه وسلم قال:

البسوا من ثيابكم البياض، فانها من خير ثيا بكم، و كفنوا فيها موتا كم

(ابو داؤد، کتاب الطب، باب فی الامر بالکحل، حدیث نمبر ۳۸۷۸)

Hazrat Abdullah bin Abbas رضی الله عنهما has narrated that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Wear white dresses as they are better and shroud your dead therewith. It appears from this Hadith that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has approved white dresses for men, although it is neither unlawful nor forbidden to wear dresses of other colours. It is proved

that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has himself worn sometimes dresses of other colours. Generally he ﷺ wore white dresses. If a man puts on white dress with the intention that the Holy Prophet ﷺ generally wore white dresses and he ﷺ approved them for others he will earn reward for acting upon the Sunnah. It is allowed for men with certain conditions to put on dresses of other colours. It is not unlawful to do so.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has put on red striped garments

عن براء بن عازب رضى الله عنه قال: كان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم مربوعا، وقد رايته فى حلة حمراء مارايت شيئا قط احسن منه

(صحيح بخارى، كتاب اللباس، باب الثوب الاحمر، حديث نمبر ٥٨٤٨)

Hazrat Barrau bin Azib رضى الله عنه has narrated, saying: Once I saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ putting on a red dress and then I did not see a more beautiful person than he. It is probably Hazrat Jabir bin Sumrah رضى الله عنه who has narrated: Once on a fourteenth moon-lit night the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sitting with a red garment on his body. At that time I sometimes looked at the full moon and sometimes at the Holy Prophet ﷺ. At last I decided that the Holy Prophet ﷺ looked far more beautiful than the moon.

These Ahadith prove that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has put on red garments also.

Dresses of pure red colour are not lawful for men

It should be noted that the dress was not totally red in colour. In the light of other Ahadith, the *Ulama* have said that in those days red striped sheets came from Yemen. They were not fully red. Those sheets were

regarded as very valuable and of high class. The Holy Prophet ﷺ is reported to have put on a suit made of these sheets of Yemen. The Holy Prophet ﷺ put on that suit to show to the *Ummah* that it was quite lawful to put on dresses of that type and colour. It is not lawful for men to wear dresses totally red in colour. Similarly, it is not lawful for men to put on dresses which are specifically meant for women, to avoid تشبہ (imitation) with women, as it is not lawful.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has also put on dresses of green colour

عن رفاعة التيمى رضى الله عنه، قال: رايت رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم وعليه ثوبان اخضران (ابو داؤد، كتاب اللباس، باب فى الخضرة حديث نمبر ٤٠٦٥)

Hazrat Rifaʿah Taimi رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that he saw the Holy Prophet ﷺ wearing two garmetns of green colour.

It appears from this Hadith that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has sometimes put on a green suit. Thus by wearing garments of other colours, he ﷺ has shown that it is quite lawful to do so. However, the Prophet's favourite wear was white garments.

The colours of the Turbans of the Holy Prophet ﷺ

وعن جابر رضى الله عنه، ان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم دخل عام الفتح مكة وعليه عمامة سوداء (ابو داود، كتاب اللباس، باب فى العمائم، حديث نمبر ٤٠٧٦)

Hazrat Jabir رضی اللہ عنہ has narrated that when in the year of the victory of Makkah the Holy Prophet ﷺ entered Makkah, he ﷺ had a black Turban on his head. It is

proved from various narratives that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has worn white, black and sometimes green Turbans also.

How long should be the sleeves?

وعن اسماء بنت یزید رضی اللہ عنھا قالت: کان کم قمیص رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم الی الرسغ (ابو داؤد، کتاب اللباس، باب ماجاء فی القمیص، حدیث نمبر ۴۰۲۷)

This means: The sleeve of the shirt of the Holy Prophet ﷺ reached up to the wrists. It is, therefore, an act of *Sunnah* for men to keep their sleeves up to the wrists. Sleeves shorter than this are also lawful but not according to the *Sunnah*. It is by no means lawful for women to keep the parts above the wrists open; it is totally forbidden (*Haram*). So far as women are concerned the entire wrist above the palm forms part ستر (concealable). This is totally unlawful to keep if open. It has now become a fashion among women to wear half-sleeve garments and sometimes the entire arms are bare. Once the Holy Prophet ﷺ called his wife's sister Hazrat Asma رضی اللہ عنھا and told her that when a girl comes of age, no part of her body should remain open except the palms of the hands and the face. If the sleeves are short, it means that the portion to be covered ستر has been left bare on a permanent basis, and such women are committing the sin of opening their ستر (concealable parts). Women should save themselves from this sin. It is also the duty of men to guide their women on the right path of the *Sunnah*.

May Almighty Allah help us to earnestly follow the path of the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. *Aameen.*

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد للہ رب العالمین